

HISTORICAL and FAMILIAR
E S S A Y S,
O N T H E
Scriptures
O F T H E
Old Testament.

By J O H N C O L L I E R,
LATE OF CHARTER-HOUSE SQUARE, LONDON;
NOW OF HIGH-WYCOMBE, BUCKS.

*“ These STUDIES improve Youth, and are
“ the Embellishment and Joy of Age, they add Grace
“ and Dignity to Prosperity, and afford the surest
“ Refuge and Consolation in Adversity, they delight
“ us at Home, and are no hindrance to Enjoyment
“ Abroad, they go to Bed with us, Travel with
“ us, and are our Companions in the Country.”*

CICERO.

I N T W O V O L U M E S.

V O L. II.

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O F T H E

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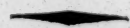
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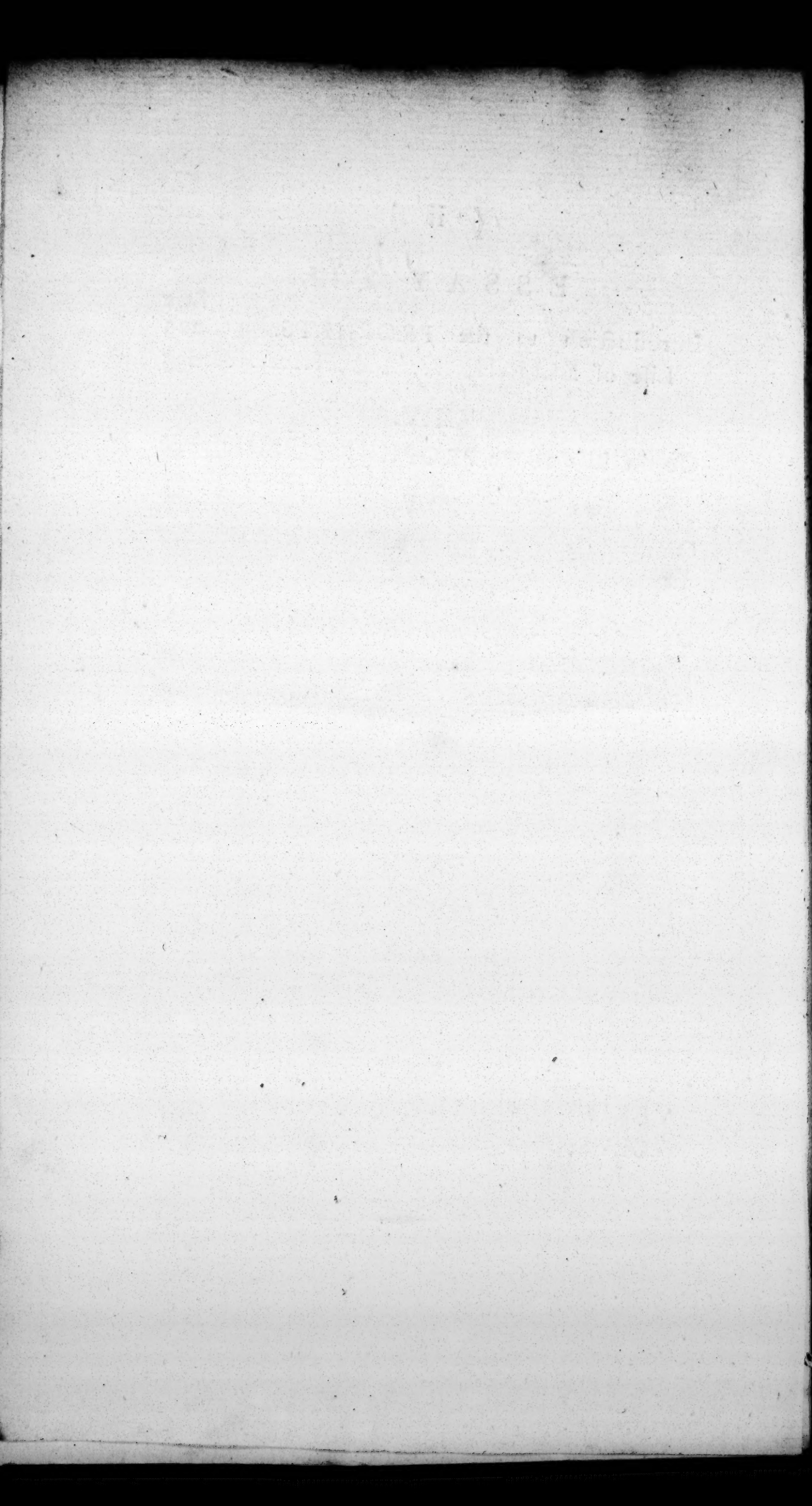
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ON THE
BOOKS
OF THE
CHRONICLES,
EZRA,
NEHEMIAH,
AND
ESTHER.

VOL. II.

B

E S S A Y XVII.

ON THE BOOKS OF THE
CHRONICLES OF THE KINGS OF
JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

BOOK THE FIRST,

THE CHRONICLES are Registers of Acts done from time to time, the Hebrew title is, Words of days, or Deeds of days.

They are journals extracted by EZRA, a very learned Jew, and an highly eminent, pious, and good Man.

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Ezra copied them from the Jewish Records after their return from the seventy years Captivity in Babylon, about the year of the World, 3407, and 516 years before the birth of our Saviour.

The Genealogies in this book are carried back as far as Adam, a Period of more than 3000 years. Records of high importance to the Jews. This Register regulated their Precedency, as many priviledges were refused all those who could not make out their descent, and it was a register also of their marriages.

A regular and unspotted lineage was required of those who aspired to the Priesthood, and such as could not produce it were held incapable of admission to the Dignity.

This Division of families, as recognized before the Destruction of Jerufalem, enabled each tribe on their return from Captivity to find out its own inheritance, appropriated to it originally by Lot.

This first Book of CHRONICLES contains the History of 2987 years, and 2947 of these are so very concise as to be only Genealogies, except a very few historical passages interspersed,
for

for the Jews could then refer to the books and records themselves. These are all since lost, the History to us therefore is very imperfect; the Titles of those Books lost were, "The Wars of the LORD." "Jasher" and a third book of Kings, together with the Chronicles of the Reigns of the Kings of Judah and Israel, to which larger history these we have extant, are continually referring.

This first Book relates also the Death of Saul, and the last forty years are the Acts of David during his Reign. In the latter end, Solomon is appointed his successor, and anointed by Zadoc, the High Priest and Nathan the Prophet, King of Israel. You have here recorded also David's glorious highly eloquent Speech, and pious advice to his Son Solomon." "And thou Solomon my Son, know thou the God of thy Fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever."

It was at this time David, convened all the Nobles, the Elders, and the States of the Kingdom,

dom, a solemn and highly important assembling of all his People, to secure their friendship, patronage and assistance to his Son and Successor, in designing, planning, in order to carry on and complete this superb and magnificent Edifice the Temple of God,—and He persuaded and invited them ; to a liberal contribution for a service so very expensive and important, in a very eloquent, wise and affectionate Speech, David powerfully excited their feelings, and then made himself a most royal, noble, and sumptuous present, with all the spirit of piety and of true and genuine Liberality.

Such Royal munificence inspired a generosity and it ran throughout the whole assembly, each was ambitious to imitate the glorious liberality of their Prince, each one eagerly brought his offering, rejoicing to contribute his share for the sacred service, and building a Temple to the name and honour of the God of Israel. The Subscription and Contribution on this occasion amounted to five thousand Talents* and ten thousand Drams of Gold, ten thousand talents of Silver, eighteen thousand of Brass, and a hundred thousand talents of Iron, and they were all paid in to the King's Treasury, together with a

* A Jewish Talent of Gold, 7200 l.

number of valuable Jewels, now presented to the state.

David's heart was quite elated at seeing the willingness and the generosity of this august Assembly and in the fulness of his joy, he burst forth into rapturous addresses and thanksgivings to God.

His prayer is fervent and most devout, in words so wise, well-chosen, and so suited to his feelings and the subject, that you must read them with high delight.

It was at this assembly the people confirmed David's choice of his Son Solomon to succeed him, and now they anointed him a second time King over all Israel.

'Tis impossible to conceive a Solemnity so grand and truly royal, so religious, magnificent and hospitable, overabounding with the genuine Spirit of Liberality; an Assembly of joy and gladness, a feast and a thanksgiving, and it concluded with so wise a settlement of the government as produced almost forty years uninterrupted prosperity and peace.

On

On this occasion David composed that admirable Ode the seventy-second Psalm. When Solomon was crowned it was appointed to be rehearsed in the sacred Oratorio, and stiled

“ The Grand Coronation Anthem.”

In the twenty-ninth chapter, David full of years, riches, and honours, died, and they buried him with great magnificence in his own sepulchre, and in the city of David. In pursuance of his express orders and directions Solomon ascended the throne of Israel, and this amiable young Prince was at the age of Eighteen.



ON THE BOOKS OF THE
CHRONICLES OF THE KINGS OF
JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

BOOK THE SECOND.

THIS Book records the History of four hundred and seventy-two years, and begins with the Reign of Solomon, carrying on the history of the Jews to their return from Babylon, after their seventy years Captivity. It ends at the same period as the Second Book of the Kings.

The Reign of Solomon fills up much of this Book. The life and transactions of that amiable Prince have been already related ; his Splendour and Wisdom are here largely dwelt upon, and

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his assiduous employment in building the Temple, the most magnificent Edifice in the World, constructed of white marble, in immense solid pieces of sixty feet, and some even of larger dimensions, the inside of the Walls and the Beams were all Cedar, covered with plates of Gold, and also the Roof, so that when the Sun shone it cast a blaze of light dazzling all that beheld it. This Building employed One hundred and sixty thousand workmen, and three thousand three hundred Overseers, during the space of seven years.

The history of the Kingdom of Judah is here recorded under nineteen Kings, all of David's posterity, and the Reign of Athaliah the Usurper, the mother of Ahaziah, King of Judah, and it represents to you the gradual approaches and declension of that Kingdom. After the first nine Chapters, the History of Judah is in this Book more distinctly related, without being blended with the reigns of the Kings of Israel.

E Z R A.

Of the vast numbers who had been carried away captive to Babylon, not more than fifty thousand

thousand Jews returned, and they were of the poorer sort, from among the most indigent. The richer, who staid behind, raised a subscription to support them in their journey.

The proposal made to the Jews was, that they should be governed by their own laws; but, as they were under subjection to Persia, and afterwards to Syria and Rome, their Privileges, and even their Religion itself, much depended on the will of their Conquerors.

[3468.] God was pleased to raise up for the Jews a Deliverer, soon after their seventy years captivity was ended. In the very first year of the reign of Cyrus, Daniel the Prophet, whom Cyrus found at Babylon, an old Minister, high in repute throughout the East, and just now had appointed him Prime Minister in the Court of Persia, this zealous good man warmly interested himself, and pointed out to that Prince the Prophecies respecting the Jews, upon which Cyrus published an Edict for their release, offering them all and every one the liberty of returning to their own Country to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. They were to take with them their gold and silver, a number of beasts for Sacrifice, together with all the rich vessels and utensils of
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the Altar and the Temple which had been carried away to Babylon, and unwisely brought out to grace the Tables of Belshazzar. Zerubbabel, a prince of Judah, was nominated as Viceroy, and appointed their Chief Magistrate, Leader, and Governor. They went out near fifty thousand souls. During the Captivity the Polity of the Jews had been in sad distraction, and as their Religion was much unobserved, it was also at Babylon much corrupted.

Immediately on the publication of the Edict the Chiefs of the Tribes of Judah and Benjamin assembled at Babylon, with the Priests and Levites, and as many, as retaining a love for their Country, and a zeal for the honour of their God, were disposed to return to that once happy land, and now came and signified their intention to go. The Wealthy among them, and many who had formed connexions, and were engaged in traffick, or had acquired places and employments, chose rather to stay, and contented themselves with raising a large contribution to supply their Brethren with what they could spare of Gold, Silver, and Valuables for the Temple.

Zerubbabel, a Prince of the Blood-royal, grandson of Jehoiakim, and Jeshua the High Priest

Priest headed the Party. They had many meetings, concerted their plans, accepted the liberal donations, and set forward on their Journey.

It was foreseeing this return and Journey of the Israelites, Isaiah composed that highly eloquent and triumphal Ode recorded in the Fourteenth Chapter of that prophet. A Burst of Joy on their release, and the Revolution and vicissitude taking place.

Each Tribe on their arrival in Judæa looked out for his own Patrimony, fenced off their grounds, rebuilt their houses, the estates of their fathers, manured their lands, and they had lain destitute and fallow two and fifty years. Zerubbabel, Jeshua the High Priest, and a numerous body of Priests and Levites, with a large Party, proceeded on to Jerusalem, and as soon as ever they could be accommodated and lodged, the Governor called together the Heads of all the families, formed his Sanhedrim, or grand Council, and instantly set about re-establishing the Jewish Commonwealth in Church and State. By the first Decree of the Governor and Council; a free will-offering was levied from every individual Person according to his Circumstances; and though they were so poor, what was now brought
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in, together with the Gifts of the richer Brethren they left behind, amounted to £.75,500. Upon this stock they began their Work, the Priests, Levites, Singers, and Officers of the Temple, settled themselves as well as they could in or near Jerusalem, the greater part dispersed themselves about the Cities and Country where they had formerly lived, and the very first business was, to rebuild the Altar for burnt-offerings, and offer up daily the morning and evening Sacrifice. At the four corners of the Altar were four small Pillars, each a cubit in height, and these were called the Horns of the Altar. A whole year was now employed in collecting Materials and Workmen, contracting with Carpenters, Masons, and Overseers, and they sent to Tyre and Sidon for Cedars, as Cyrus had directed them. In the second Month of the second Year, the foundation of the Temple was laid with great solemnity. Zerubbabel their Governor, Jeshua their High Priest, the Council, Heads, and whole Congregation, were all present while the first stone was laid. The Trumpeters blew the Trumpets, a large Band of Music played, and the Voices all struck up—

“ Praise ye the Lord ! Sing aloud unto God !
“ and all the People shouted.”

Many

Many were the interruptions to the Building, great the Opposition and Difficulties they met with, powerful enemies endeavoured to put a stop to the Work, and it stood still for years; at length, under the eye and daily attendance of three Prophets, their many signal and promising encouragements, and immense gifts from the Court of Persia, it was finished, but not till the foundation had been laid twenty years. The Dedication of it was celebrated by the Priests, Levites, and all Israel, with great Joy and high Solemnity, and they offered up a hundred Bulls, two hundred Rams, four hundred Lambs, and for a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve He goats according to the Number of the Tribes of Israel.

The return to Jerusalem commences the Book of Ezra, and it informs you of the three Worthies God raised up for his people. ZERUBBABEL, who built the Temple and the Altar; EZRA, who reformed their Religion; and NEHEMIAH, who built the walls of the City.

The history of ZERUBBABEL is recorded in the first Six Chapters of this Book, and EZRA himself is the subject of the four last.

It contains a period of one hundred and forty-six years, and the Acts thereof were accomplished during the Reigns of six successive Persian Monarchs: Cyrus, Darius, Ahasuerus, Artaxerxes, Darius the Second, and a Second Artaxerxes. Seventy-nine years after their establishment, by the interest of Esther, who on the deposition of Vashti, was afterwards Queen to Ahasuerus*, Ezra, the son of Seraiah, a very learned Jew of the house of Aaron, obtained a full Commission from Artaxerxes to succeed Zerubbabel, the present Viceroy, and return to Jerusalem, with as many of his Nation, now residing at Shushan or Babylon, as were willing to go with him, and there to regulate and reform all matters of state, and restore the worship of God among the Jews in the City of Jerusalem.

The high reputation of Ezra in the Court of Persia may be judged of by the Commission itself, it ran thus:

“ Artaxerxes, King of Kings, unto EZRA,
 “ Priest of the Law of the God of Heaven
 “ Peace. It is our decree, whosoever of you
 “ be desirous of returning to Jerusalem, be per-
 “ mitted to go safely thither,” &c. &c.

* Ahasuerus means Prince, Head, or Chief.

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and they were to carry with them immense presents from the King, and many valuable free-will offerings from their wealthy Brethren.

In the middle of March, about the year of the World 3546. EZRA, set out on his Journey, and he pitched his Tents, on the Banks of the River Ahavah, and waited there to collect and assemble all his Company.

EZRA here invited to join him two hundred and twenty Nethenims (a race of Gibeonites dedicated to the Service of the Altar) and a number of Priests and Levites to officiate in the Services of the Temple. As soon as he had here assembled a large Body of People, EZRA issued out a proclamation for a general Fast, and Days of Thanksgiving to implore the blessing and Protection of God, he then proceeded on his Journey, and arrived with all his Company safe at Jerusalem, in the middle of the Month of July about four Months after he had set out.

At Jerusalem, EZRA convened the Heads and Elders of the People, and as soon as possible he formed an assembly, and before them all EZRA broke the Seals of his Commission, had it publicly

lickly read, and delivered up to the Treasury and Priests all the offerings which had been made by the King of Persia, the Nobles, and those of the Jews who chose to continue and reside at Babylon. Ezra next, from among the wisest of the People, appointed Judges and Magistrates, and gave each of them their Commission, empowering them, not only to inflict Fines and Imprisonment, but even capitally to convict, a power of Life and Death.

EZRA maintained the Supreme Authority under his Commission from the Persian Court thirteen Years, employing himself in the faithful discharge of every part of his Duty with the most pious Zeal and assiduity, and yet EZRA does not seem to have had Power or Influence enough to make the necessary Reform, and even the City so comfortable and habitable as to invite a general Resort to the Metropolis, for the very Walls were yet in ruins.

At this time Nehemiah succeeded him as Governor or Viceroy, and he brought with him a new Commission with Authority and fresh Powers from Persia.

EZRA, with Piety and a graceful Condescension, assumed now a subordinate station, he acted as President to the Sanhedrim, the Grand Council of the Elders, and employed his whole time in reforming the Jewish Church, restoring all its Rites and Discipline. He carefully examined all the sacred Books; revised, corrected, and published a new Edition of them, and reduced the Mosaic Law to its primitive standard and purity, and he fixed the Number of the Books of the Old Testament to twenty-two. EZRA was learned and well versed in them all, his high Station and Authority enabled him to collect the best copies, EZRA was himself inspired, zealous for God, and he engaged in this arduous work three Prophets, HAGGAI, ZACHARIAH, and MALACHI.

When NEHEMIAH was established in his new Government, EZRA, relieved from publick Duties and Affairs of the State, now brought forth his sacred Volume, and expounded in it publicly from morning till noon, and that he might be better heard, he caused a Scaffold to be erected in one of the widest Streets of the City. EZRA himself stood leaning on a high desk in the middle, and on each side of him stood six Priests, interpreters and assistants, and as EZRA spoke in Hebrew

brew, the Priests explained in the Chaldee, a language they had been lately used to. All the people (and some came from very distant parts, especially on feast days and holidays) could thus distinctly hear him, and had the Law and their Duty explained and recommended fully to them every day.

The last Work EZRA performed was restoring to the People the sacred Service of the Temple, according to the original and usual Form before the Captivity, he revised and amended all the Jewish Liturgy, adding to it many new Prayers and Forms of Thanksgiving, composed since their return from Babylon, on the Blessings of Liberty and Deliverance. This pious and truly good Man employed himself in composing a Service suited to the Dedication of this new Temple, and as Psalms and spiritual Hymns entered into almost every part of the Jewish worship, he revised them all, and took the greatest Pains to methodize and collect them; he added also many of his own Composition, and the order they are now placed in, Our Saviour, and after him his Apostles, always referred to them.

EZRA had been now some years succeeded in his Government by NEHEMIAH, who had been
horour-

honorably, usefully, and zealously employed under his new Commission from the Court of Persia. EZRA had at first introduced him, and given him all the assistance in his power, after which he confined his usefulness, presiding more particularly over the Church. Some Authors assert that he now died, and was buried in Jerusalem; but others say, that in his old age he returned into Persia, and that he died there at the age of one hundred and twenty. EZRA brings down the History of the Jews to the twentieth Year of Ahafuerus, the then reigning King of Persia.

From the very first of his Commission EZRA acted with great disinterestedness for the good of his Country, and continued his usefulness in the State as much by the Authority of the New Governor as before by his own, for his Successor had the same Zeal for the Honour of God, and the same patriotic endeavours for the Welfare of the People, and in right earnest coincided with him in the Work. EZRA, as a Priest, a Preacher of Righteousness, and a skilful Scribe of the Law of God, unweariedly went on to perfect the Reformation he had begun, and spent almost his whole time preparing correct Editions of the Holy Scriptures, during the Babylonish Captivity

Captivity they had been lost and many of them destroyed, what remained were chiefly in private hands, EZRA restored them again as it were by divine Revelation.

He corrected all the Errors that had crept into the various Copies by negligence or mistake.

He collected all the Books together, placed them in order, settled the Canon of Scripture for his Time, the Law, the Prophets, the Holy Writings, and Our Saviour, notices this three-fold Division. EZRA added what was necessary for illustrating, connecting, or completing them.

This very eminent, pious, and good man may truly be said to be a second Founder of the Jewish Church and State. A Character highly esteemed, honoured, and beloved, a divine Law-giver, zealous for God, and he was stiled a second Moses.

In the Church of St. Dominic, in Bononia, is a Copy of the Hebrew Scriptures, kept with a great deal of Care, said to be written by EZRA himself upon Leather, made up into a Roll, according to the ancient Manner.

It

It was only after their return from Captivity the Name of Jews became common amongst them. The Book of EZRA is a continuation of the History from the time the Book of the Chronicles conclude, and so exact that the two first verses, and part of the third are a repetition of the two last Verses of the Second Book of Chronicles. The intervening time of their Captivity, Affliction, and Punishment, is very little noticed any where, Jewish Authors seem designedly to pass over that sad Period. You sorrowfully view a harrassed and disconsolate people, the better, or rather the richer Sort, reconciled to the mode of Life, and Customs of their Oppressors, engaged in some business and employment with them, contented themselves with staying in Babylon. The poorer and unprovided among them make up the principal Number of those returning home to a Country which had long lain desolate. Reluctantly they set about rebuilding of their Temple, some of them recognizing the Magnificence and Glory of the Old, under much opposition they carried on the Work, and at last, after twenty years, it was finished, and its solemn Dedication performed in the Year of the World 3489 and 515 before the Birth of OUR SAVIOUR.

ON THE BOOK OF
NEHEMIAH.

THIS great and good man stands a noble Instance of a disinterested Patriot, unweariedly assiduous, zealous, and wise. NEHEMIAH was a Jew, but he had never seen Jerusalem. His ancestors had lived and died there. His Father was carried in early life to Shushan, metropolis of Persia, he had been fortunate enough to obtain an Establishment at Court, and he chose rather to continue in his office than give it up and return with his countrymen, when on the Edict issued

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out, leave was given them to return and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.

NEHEMIAH either succeeded his Father, or accepted some other Promotion at Court ; he held a Post of great Profit and highly honourable about the person and presence of the King and Queen, and from the Royal favour and his lucrative employ, NEHEMIAH became very rich.

His Father Hechaliah was one of the captive Jews, he himself was probably born at Shushan or Babylon, a man of publick spirit, learning, and piety, and his appointment was, cup-bearer to the King of Persia.

NEHEMIAH was taking an evening walk near Susa, and seeing some Travellers, who seemed Strangers, going towards the city gates, and (as they passed him, talking Hebrew) he spoke to them, You come from a great distance, from what Country pray ? and they said, from Jerusalem. He enquired after the people and the city, and they told him of the broken Walls, and of the riotous Banditti that came plundering every night, and there was no possibility of keeping them out ; of a morning (they said) the roads were strewed with the dead bodies.

NEHE-

NEHEMIAH could not suppress his tears, his sighs, his sobs burst forth, the distresses of his poor countrymen so afflicted him, he offered up, (just as he stood) a fervent prayer to God on their behalf; while thus employed and agitated, a servant ran to tell him the King was going to Supper. NEHEMIAH hastens to the Palace, never wiped away his tears or washed his face; he went in to wait upon his Majesty, and very luckily Queen Esther was present; the King had noticed NEHEMIAH, and after Supper, in a very pleasant humour, he asks,

“ What is the matter with you, NEHEMIAH ?

“ what cause have you for sorrow and tears ? ”

and he now took courage, and told the King of all that had so distressed him: Jerusalem was the City of his Ancestors, all their monuments were there, its gates and all its walls were down, and the robbers were infesting and murdering its inhabitants. NEHEMIAH's sorrowful story ended in a Petition to his Majesty, that he might be commissioned and empowered to go and rebuild the walls of his City.

The King issued out immediate orders to Sanballat, and other officers of his Court, to supply

NEHEMIAH from the royal Treasury with Money and every necessary material, and now says the King.

“ Dry up your tears NEHEMIAH, and be chearful.”

He fell down on his face, overflowing with joy and gratitude. NEHEMIAH excused from his attendance and daily duty, set out immediately for Babylon, and there he raises a sufficient Number of Men and Women to accompany him on his Journey, and the King appointed him an Escort of Troops for his Guard. NEHEMIAH and all his Company arrived safe at Jerusalem. He here shut himself up three whole days, after which he sallied out towards evening, and made his observations on the City and its Walls. The report he received from the Travellers he had met at Shushan, proved exactly true. The very next morning, NEHEMIAH assembled the Heads, Elders, and Magistrates, and before a numerous body of the People, purposely convened, he opened his new commission, required their assistance to put it in force, and aid the execution of his orders respecting the city walls, he engaged a numerous body of workmen, and their families, diligently presided every day himself over all the work, and in two and fifty days, they had all completed their task,

task, repaired and fortified the Walls: with true piety NEHEMIAH caused a Dedication of it to be celebrated with the usual Solemnities by the Priests and Levites.

NEHEMIAH found the People in a deplorable condition, oppressed with poverty, involved in debts, overwhelmed with usurers and extortioners, who took a base advantage of the distress of their countrymen, and made them mortgage or sell their lands for present bread, for themselves and their children. NEHEMIAH, by persuasion and authority, removed the iniquity and oppression, obliged all persons to make restitution, and by a solemn Oath compelled them to do so no more. He exhibited his Courage on all occasions, signally exposing himself to the most dangerous situations, and even to drudgery. He kept a body Guard about his person, but it was not for fear of being killed, but lest his fellow-citizens should not finish the building of the walls.

He made the Labourers work in Armour, both the Mason and his Man wore swords, and shields lay by them, and trumpeters were fixed at proper distances to sound an alarm whenever an enemy approached. NEHEMIAH was once told of a conspiracy formed against him, of Assassins determined

mined to kill him, and he was advised to take refuge in the Temple ; but NEHEMIAH said,

“ Should such a man as I flee ? Who is there, being as I am, would go into the Temple to save his life ? I will not go in.”

After the walls were completely finished, as NEHEMIAH's first Commission extended only to the rebuilding of the walls, he was obliged to take a Journey back to Shushan, in order to obtain a new one. He entrusted the care of his government and the city to two of his Brothers during his absence.

On NEHEMIAH's return to Jerusalem, he busily employed himself in peopling and fortifying the city, and beautifying the new Temple. It was at this time Ezra gave his public lectures from morning till noon, in the open street, where he had caused a scaffold to be erected, and a high desk; in which he sat himself, and on each side of him stood six Priests to interpret what he said to the People.

Ezra read his Oration in Hebrew, and they explained it in the Chaldee, a language they had long been used to, and many of them knew no other.

All

All the abuses and disorders of the State, as far as his influence and authority reached, NEHEMIAH zealously and diligently corrected. He now assembled all the People and made a contribution for carrying on the embellishments and adorning the Temple, and for the maintenance and support of its Service, and he set them a Princely example, giving them himself a thousand drams of Gold, fifty dishes, two hundred and fifty two vestments for the Priests. In order to accommodate the Priests and Levites, he built them houses near the Temple, and he encouraged them, all he could, to a regular and devout attendance on its services.

NEHEMIAH kept a Princely table, a splendid Equipage, and a train of servants, altogether at his own expence, exacting no tribute whatever. Thus with the highest credit, generosity, and honour, he completed the tenor of his Commission. NEHEMIAH had presided as Governor twelve Years, and now according to his promise he returned back to the Court of Persia. After five Years residence at Shushan, NEHEMIAH obtained a grant to return to his Viceroyship at Jerusalem, and he witnessed a very great depravity and corruption both in the Church and Commonwealth, they had profaned the Temple and neglected its Services,

Services, they had broke their Sabbaths, and made the day, a day of traffick, and they followed their threshing and plowing, and usual occupations on it.

NEHEMIAH assembled the Magistrates and severely reprov'd them, from sun-set every Friday he shut up the city gates, and would not suffer them to be opened till the Sabbath was over, he prevented hereby the Tyrians from bringing in their merchandizes, and they altogether desisted, the custom and practice henceforward was totally abolished.

Lectures and expositions on the Pentateuch were daily given in Jerusalem, NEHEMIAH strenuously enforced the observance of the Mosaic Law throughout the Kingdom, they were at first read in the streets and market-places, till Schools and Seminaries were formed, and Synagogues built for the purpose, these last were not completely finished and occupied till after the death of this very amiable, pious, and good man.

He thus carried on the 'Reformation both of Church and State. NEHEMIAH wrote himself this his own History and Book, and brings down the Transactions of the Jews to the Reign of
Darius

Darius Nothus, a Persian King, who had changed his name to Ochus, and to about 422 Years before the birth of Our Saviour. He is believed to be the last Governor sent from Persia. The Government of Judæa was afterwards maintained by the High Priests till Alexander the Great totally destroyed the Persian Empire.

It is no where recorded where NEHEMIAH died, Josephus only says, his death fell out after he was very far advanced in years.

This truly zealous and disinterested Patriot had his recompence in both Worlds, happy in the love of his people, in the success of his honest labours, in recording his own history, transmitting his name and reputation to all generations, a part of Holy Writ more honourable and durable than the Grecian Pillar, or the Roman Statue, his liberality, disinterestedness, courage, and industry, his affectionate feelings and love of his Country will live there for ever.



ON THE BOOK OF

ESTHER.

THE Jews, rescued from a general Massacre, to which they had been devoted by a haughty and imperious Lord, first favourite in the Court of Persia, a most amiable and very beautiful Princess, ESTHER, once a Jewish captive, but now Queen to Ahasuerus, by her interest and influence with the King saved them, and a Jewish Festival, called Purim, or the Feast of Lots, is annually solemnized in commemoration.

Mordecai,

Mordecai, her Uncle, perpetuates the memory of this signal and most wonderful deliverance, and he writes himself a narrative of all the Plot, and the very extraordinary Providence by which it was discovered and prevented.

Ahasuerus is a name of royal dignity and distinction rather than a surname. The history informs us,

“ A great Monarch, King of Persia, made a
 “ sumptuous Feast in his Palace at Shushan, the
 “ Metropolis of his Kingdom, and in high Spirits
 “ all jovial in the banqueting-hall, he sent a messenger to Vashti, his Queen, and desired her to
 “ join his Company gorgeously arrayed in all her
 “ royal apparel, and that she would take her seat,
 “ now in the sight of all his Nobles.”

A request so unexpected and very unusual, as the laws of Persia forbade a wife's appearance before strangers, the Queen modestly declines, and ventures to disobey. The haughty Monarch, unused to all opposition, was outrageously angry, in his first fury he instantaneously summoned his Grand Council of Seven, lays before them his accusation, and Vashti's disobedience, they, dreading both his passion and the effects of such a conduct

in so elevated a station, passed a sentence of divorce and condemnation on her Majesty, commanding her to be dethroned immediately.

The King had time to cool, he became all pity and despair, he loved Vashti, she was the first of beauties, her crime was modesty, she had violated no law, he had unwittingly done it himself, his vanity and pride the cause, but the Council were to be honoured, and Vashti, Queen of Persia, was dethroned.

The King fell into a state of despondency, and in order to divert his melancholy, and induce him to think the less of Vashti, his Nobles came to him, requesting his Majesty to make choice of another Queen. A number of young virgins were always provided for, in elegant apartments in the Palace, and they regularly underwent a six months preparation with odours and rich perfumes; from among these the Kings of Persia made their choice when they married. The winning Beauty and superior elegance of Esther inflamed the love of Ahasuerus, and He advanced her to the throne of Persia; she was indeed a most beautiful virgin, an orphan of the Tribe of Benjamin, brought up and adopted by her uncle Mordecai, who was himself a descendant of those who had been brought

brought captive to Babylon, and as he constantly attended at the Palace-gate seems to have been one of the King's Porters. Mordecai had interest enough at Court to introduce his Niece into the Palace among other Beauties, Candidates for Royalty, and to succeed Vashti, the late Queen, now in her disgrace.

Haman was first favourite in the Court of Ahasuerus, haughty, insolent, and vain, an Amalakite, a most avowed enemy to all the Jews, a wicked minister, indulgent only to his passions, with honours next to royal, his pride was daily fed with the base homage of an Asiatic Court. One Officer only of all the household refused to prostrate himself before Haman, Mordecai the Jew; he with virtuous indignation, disgusted with his vanity, and knowing him to be an Amalakite, bowed not, nor did him reverence. Haman was full of wrath, he thought it too little, and Mordecai too contemptible an object, to execute his resentment and wanton cruelty on him alone, he determined to destroy and totally extirpate all the race of Jews throughout the Kingdom, but to distinguish Mordecai, and punish his undutifulness, Haman had erected a gallows, 150 feet high, in his own court-yard for Mordecai.

Just

Just about this time a conspiracy was entered into by some place-men at Court, and it was discovered by a Jew, and that Jew revealed it to Mordecai, he told it his Neice, entrusting the secret with the Queen, a very wise and sure method of preventing the mischief, and acquiring the love and regard of the King. The whole transaction was registered in the State Volume, and one night, the King being unusually wakeful, he ordered up the books, and enquired, what had been done for Mordecai? and who was without in waiting? and they said, Haman is just now entering the great Gate, the King sent for him in, and asked him what honour and dignity, He should confer on one, who had, with the most loyal zeal and affection, distinguished his fidelity to him. Haman's good opinion of himself, in his highly exalted station, had conceit enough to apply this Princely favour to himself, and he said,

“ Let the royal apparel be brought out, which
 “ the King useth to wear, and the horse which
 “ the King rideth upon, and the Crown royal
 “ which is set upon his head, let them be delivered
 “ to one of the King's most noble Princes, to
 “ array the man whom the King delighteth to
 “ honour—thus leading him, and proclaiming his
 “ loyalty, through the high streets of Shushan.”

The

The King instantly replied to Haman, make haste;

“ Do you take the apparel, and the horse, and
 “ do you even so to Mordecai the Jew that sitteth
 “ at the gate, and let nothing fail of all that thou
 “ hast spoken.”

Mordecai, after receiving these high and distinguished honours, led in princely state by Haman, was set down at the gate of the Palace. Haman abashed and mortified, covered up his face, he mourned bitterly, and hastened home to his own house; the plot he had laid, and so cunningly contrived against Mordecai and the Jews, he saw plainly was discovered, and while he was telling his suspicions, and sad story, to a select party of his friends, and Zeresh his wife, even while they were yet talking, the King's Chamberlain brought a message inviting Haman to a Banquet Queen Esther had prepared for the King and him.

The entertainment and invitation to a feast, was the usual mode of petitioning the throne, and it lasted two days :

“ On the second the King enquired of ESTHER
 “ what request she had to make to him, assuredly
 “ it

“ it should be granted her, even to the half of
“ his Kingdom.”

The Queen, encouraged by his courtesy, most
submissively addressed him :

“ If I have found favour in thy sight, O King,
“ let my life be given me at my petition, and my
“ people at my request ; I, and my people are
“ fold, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to
“ perish.”

The King, wonderfully astonished, enquired,
“ Who is he ? where is he ? who thus presumes ?”

And Esther replies,

“ The adversary, the enemy, is this wicked
“ Haman.”

Haman was all confusion—fore afraid—The
King arose from the Banquet in high wrath—walk-
ed out into the Palace Garden—Haman availed
himself of the moment, fell down prostrate before
the Queen, and while he was most earnestly suing
for his life, the King walks back again into the
Hall. He misconstrued Haman's abasement and
and submissive posture. To prevent aggravation,
the Officers in waiting covered Haman's mouth,
and

and one of them, Harbonah, said,

“ Behold the Gallows fifty Cubits high ”

Haman hath set it up for Mordecai, and it stands in the Court-yard of Haman. The King, instantly replied :

“ Hang Haman thereon ”

The History informs us, that on the Gallows prepared for Mordecai they hanged Haman, and that the King's wrath was by this means pacified.

The Method Mordecai took to make known the cruel design and Plot of Haman, is highly curious and interesting ; he cloathed himself in Sack-cloth and Ashes, and placed himself before the Palace-gate leading to the Queen's Apartment ; Esther seeing him from the Windows, sent hastily to know the cause. Mordecai sent her Majesty word of Haman's intentions, and the Edict already issued out from the King : he earnestly presses her to go to Him and prevent its murderous Execution, the Queen names her great difficulty, and the danger she should run, but is over-persuaded by the Arguments and the entreaty of her Uncle, one strong reason among many others exceedingly struck her.

She might have been raised to the Throne, even for this very purpose of saving her people.

G

It

It was the established Law of Persia to admit no one whatever into the Presence-Chamber without a summons, and leave first obtained, the King usually sat en-throned, gorgeously arrayed, a Golden Sceptre always by him, encompassed with a body-guard armed each with a hatchet, to execute the commands of the Sovereign and butcher every one who should enter without Orders, unless the Golden Sceptre was held out to save him. Hence arose the distress and danger of the Queen, but her own native Sweetness, duty to her Uncle, and most of all affection for her People, overcame her own personal Safety and alarm. She now enjoins upon herself and all her Maidens, a three days fast spent in devout and solemn Prayers to God, and at the end of them, arrayed in her most splendid Attire, she intruded into the presence-Chamber and most submissively approached the Throne. Her heart here began to fail her; the King strangely agitated, his wonder and surprise alarmed her the more, the Queen fainted away, and is upheld wholly by her two Maidens; the King was struck with grief and terror. He descends from his Throne, full of Tendernefs Pity and wonder; He keeps waving over her his Golden Sceptre, the token of safety and protection, most kindly He soothes, and caresses her,

as soon as the Queen had recovered, she gratefully thanks his Majesty, and solicits the honour of his company to the Banquet she had prepared, when the invitation was accepted, it almost always followed that the request there made, was successfully granted.

These are the striking Anecdotes of this instructive and entertaining History.

Mordecai was advanced to the highest honours, he was in Rule and Authority the second in the Kingdom ; he promoted all his Kindred to Posts of Dignity and Emolument, and his Country-men were wealthy, and prosperous.

We learn from the History also, the Means Esther made use of, to procure so much good to her Nation. Zeal and piety, devout approaches to God by fasting and prayer, and an annual Commemoration of so happy an Event, a grateful offering of Praise and thanksgiving, by all the Jews throughout every City.

The over-ruling Providence of God is signally displayed, and the sure and certain means of acquiring his Favour. In a Synagogue of the Jews at Amadam in Persia, are still shewn the Tombs of Mordecai and Esther.—

This

**This book finishes the History of the Jews,
as conveyed down to us in the Scriptures of the
Old Testament.**



ESSAY

REIGNS OF THE HIGH
PRIESTS

BEING A

CONTINUATION

OF THE

JEWISH HISTORY,

FROM THE PERIOD WHERE THE

OLD TESTAMENT FINISHES

TO THE

REIGN OF HEROD,

Forty Years before the Appearance of

OUR SAVIOUR.

REIGN OF THE HIGH

PRINCE

OF THE NATION

JEWISH HISTORY

FROM THE PERIOD WHEN THE

OLD TESTAMENT FINISHES

TO THE

REIGN OF HEROD

FOR THE FIRST TIME APPEARED OF

OUR SAVIOR

E S S A Y XVIII.

THE last Governor sent to JUDÆA from the Court of Persia was NEHEMIAH: after his Viceroyship, Judæa was added to the Prefecture of Syria, and the Jews became subjects to the reigning Conquerors of that Empire: The High Priest for the time being was vested with the Authority and regulation of Church and State, and the Hebrews paid a yearly tribute to Syria.*

Jehoida § the High Priest at this time died and was succeeded by his Son Jonathan. ‡

Jonathan † maintained the Authority together with the Dignity of the Priest-hood, in full exercise of their power as delegated by Syria two and thirty years, at which time Jonathan died and JADUA his Son assumed both the Authority and Office of the Priest-hood, in room of his Father.

* Before Christ 409. § Jehoida. ‡ Jonathan. † Jadua,
At

At this time Alexander, in the hour of Victory with his Laurel Crown returned in all his Glory and Triumph from the reduction of Tyre, and total overthrow of the Tyrian Empire: With his victorious troops, Alexander was on the full march against Jerusalem: Jadda (the High Priest) sorely alarmed and apprised of his intentions arrayed himself in his Pontifical Robes, habited all his Priests in their respective dresses, and accompanied by a concourse of People all in white vestures, made a solemn Procession to a rising ground a little out of the City, and placed themselves on an eminence by the side of which Alexander and his army were to pass. The King struck with the sight of the Venerable Prelate, his graceful and magnificent dress, the Name of God emblazoned on his front and encircled by his Priests, Alexander was seized with a panick, a sacred and religious awe, he advanced reverentially towards him, respectfully bowing, he embraced him, and worshiped the sacred Divinity inscribed on his Mitre: The King, then directing his Army to follow, marched slowly on, attended by the High Priest and all his Retinue through the City of Jerusalem to the Temple, Alexander there with reverence himself witnessed, the Devotion and ceremonious Pomp of Jewish Worship and the Solemnities of Sacrifice.

The.

The High Priest with great propriety, while now in the Temple, pointed out to the Conqueror all the Prophecies respecting himself, signal-ly fore-telling his many glorious victories and wide extended Dominions, whereupon the Jews obtained exemption from tribute one year in seven, and a free Charter for the Exercise of their Religion and Laws. And Alexander ever after distinguished the Jews by many honours, and signal favours in every part of his Kingdom both in and out of Palæstine.

In the twentieth year of his pontificate Judas died, Onias his Son succeeded him, and Onias retained the Dignity twenty-one years.

By the Death of Alexander, their very generous friend, the Jews sustained a very great loss: as Judæa lay between Syria and Egypt, it became at different times in bondage and subjection to them both.

Ptolemy King of Egypt with' a formidable Army first invaded Judæa, and laid close siege to its Capital. Ptolemy well aware of the Hebrew Laws and the strictness of Jewish Worship, ordered on their Sabbath a general Storm and all his Engines to work: He thus made himself

Vol. II. H Master

Master of the City without opposition or resistance and led away Captive one hundred thousand Jews.

JUDÆA remained under subjection to Egypt five years. Simon surnamed the Just was their Sovereign Pontiff, at this time Simon died after He had distinguishingly honoured the High-Priesthood nine years ; highly eminent was this great and good Man for his Sanctity, Integrity and Patriotism. Simon was the last member remaining of the Great Synagogue, consisting of one hundred and twenty. He had unweariedly employed himself in completing the Canon of the Holy Scriptures and finally settling the Jewish Liturgy :

“ The Books Simon added to the sacred Canon
 “ were, the two books of the Chronicles, the
 “ books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther and Ma-
 “ lachi.”

Simon was succeeded in his high Office by Eleazar his Brother, his Son being an infant, and Eleazar officiated as High Priest fifteen years. He left a Son named Onias at the age of

Eleazar. Manasses. Onias the Second.

thirty,

thirty, but his Son was set aside in order to make way for his Great Uncle Manasses, and Manasses was Uncle to Simon the Just. The High Priest was very far advanced in years when He assumed the Dignity: Manasses died soon after, and Onias his grand Nephew now thirty two succeeded him.

ONIAS unlike his Ancestors was base, sordid, selfish and indolent, so avaritious, his money was his God: his Avarice and meanness were most wretchedly ill-timed, and at length arrived to so high a pitch as to induce him to put into his own Coffers, the tribute money he had engaged to pay to Syria, the shameful detection and enquiry occasioned much distress and trouble to his country.

AT the Death of Onias, Simon the second was nominated to the High Priest-hood and succeeded his Father: A Pontiff of amiable manners, true Dignity, and Piety, Zealous for God, of distinguished honour, conduct and bravery. At the Death of Simon the second, Onias the third took upon him the Government, and became their High Priest, He also was a highly

Simon the second. Before Christ 237. Onias
the third.

H 2

worth

worthy Character of signal Clemency, benevolence and Piety: It was in the eighth year of his Pontificate, the Jews lost their good friend and Protector, Antiochus King of Syria, and Antiochus was succeeded in his Government by Seleucus.

JUDÆA had enjoyed a profound peace now for some years, and preserved a strict adherence to her Religion and Laws: the Common-wealth was arrived at high honours, courted by sovereign Princes, and the Jews had received many sumptuous and magnificent Presents, and rich offerings to the Temple.

AFTER Onias had thus wisely and religiously governed and instructed the People four and twenty years, the High Priest-hood was treacherously taken from him by Jason, one of his Brothers. At the Death of Selencus King of Syria, Jason was informed of the empty Coffers of the Kingdom: The Young Prince his Son on his coming to the Crown, found the treasury quite exhausted, and his Country impoverished by the large tribute, his Predecessors had annually paid to Rome: Jason took the advantage of Young

Jason.

Antiochus's

Antiochus's Penury, he went to Antioch and made him an offer of three hundred and fifty Talents, for the High Priest-hood and the Government of Judæa. Antiochus accepted his offer, instantly commanded his Commiſſion to be made out, and ſigned an order for Onias's depoſition and confinement, together with his baniſhment from Judæa, without this laſt caution, Jaſon would have had no proſpect of enjoying, this his ill-gotten Dignity, as the amiable Character and ſignal Piety of his Brother, muſt have revived the reſentment and hatred of the People, and proved a conſtant Check to his Authority and influence.

AFTER this, Jaſon returned with his Commiſſion and new Powers, and raiſing a powerful Party, ſet about eſtabliſhing himſelf in his Dignities, and the Government he had baſely purchaſed. Availing himſelf ſtill of the empty treasury and neceſſities of the Syrian Prince, He preſented Antiochus with one hundred and fifty Talents more, for liberty to erect in Jeruſalem an Amphitheatre, in a foreign ſtile, for training up the Hebrew Youth in Gymnaſtic Exerciſes, after the Grecian manner, and correſponding with the Olympic Games, and he tacked to his new Pa-

Before Chriſt 175.

tent,

tent, the valuable Privilege of making such of his subjects as he thought fit, Citizens of Antioch, (Metropolis of Syria, and of all the East) conferring on them at pleasure, the freedom of that celebrated City. To this superb Amphitheatre, Jason gave the name of Gymnasium. A wonderful Change was soon experienced in Jerusalem—a general Apostacy succeeded—Academies were instituted, and suitable buildings erected both for the Jewish Youth, and for Men grown up, where indecencies disgraceful to humanity, in bold defiance of the Hebrew Laws, were publickly exhibited—both Priests and Laity neglected the Service of the Temple, and they all flocked to the heathenish Amphitheatre, where—by the Jewish Laws, their Religion and Rights were all of them sacrificed to the wild Ambition and impiety of Jason.

THE Young Prince, Antiochus Epiphanes, after his Coronation and establishment in his Kingdom, on hearing a report that the King of Egypt just now come of Age, designed to attempt the recovery of Palæstine, He set out on a Tour through the Neighbouring Provinces, and visited Jerusalem in his way. Jason most highly delighted to ingratiate himself in the favour of Antiochus, received his Majesty with great state and magnifi-

magnificence, notwithstanding which, after the King's return to Antioch, Menelaus, Jason's Brother, He treacherously treated with Antiochus for the Priest-hood, and when he was sent to the Court of Syria to pay the annual Tribute Money he offered the King three hundred Talents more for the High Priest-hood, than his Brother Jason had given: Antiochus made no Scruple to accept, his Offer, ordered his Secretary to make out a fresh Commission, and Menelaus returned with it to Jerusalem, in the third year only, of Jason's Pontificate. A most infamous and wretched use Menelaus made of the Authority and Dignity, he also had so impiously purchased: Menelaus impoverished all his Country, the Capital became destitute and unprotected, the Sanhedrim or Grand Council were so terrified they held their peace from necessity—by degrees he enslaved Judæa, and overturned all that was left of her Religion and her liberties. With all his Art, Oppression, and endeavours, Menelaus could not raise the immense Sum he had agreed to pay Antiochus, (tho he had secretly melted down the Golden Vessels of the Temple,) upon which all was Riot, tumult, and Confusion. Jason animated by these new troubles, availed himself of the times and with a band of resolute and desperate Men, He appeared at the City Gates, without

out any opposition entered Jerufalem, and drove Menelaus and his Party into the Citadel, Jafon was in high fpirits, glutting his revenge on his brother, and executing the moft horrid Barbarities on all who opposed him, when in the midft of his triumph, a Meffenger came running to inform him Antiochus, the Syrian Monarch, at the head of a formidable Army, was on the full march and not very far from the City. Upon this intelligence, Jafon and his bold and refolute men were immediately forced to quit it. The Citizens and Soldiery alarmed, and apprized of Antiochus's fiercenefs, and intention to flaughter them, attempted at firft to fhut themfelves up, and make all the refiftance in their power, but the Gates were battered and forced open, and the city taken by ftorm. With the moft favage Cruelty Antiochus murdered forty thoufand Jews, the reft he took Captive, and ordered them to be fold for Slaves to all the neighbouring Nations around: The Haughty Tyrant then commanded Menelaus to attend him to the Temple, this infamous and abandoned Priest entered it with him, impioufly polluting that facred Edifice throughout, and even the Holy of Holies: In wanton blasphemy Antiochus, facrilegioufly offered up on the Altar of

Before Chrift 170.

burnt

burnt offerings, a Sow, and scattered its fragments over all the Temple, and the King carried off with him the golden Altar of Incense, the shew bread table, the golden candlestick, vessels, utensils and donatives to the value of eighteen hundred talents of gold, together with the plunder of the whole City. On his return to Antioch, He issued out a Decree for suppressing throughout his Dominions every Religion, all worship to the Gods, except the worship of the Idols he himself had set up, and to whom alone he paid his Adoration. Antiochus enraged at the Conduct of the Jews, and in order to humble them, commanded all, and every one of his Subjects to abstain from their Religious Usages and Customs and the offering up of Sacrifice. Every person was examined by oath, every house searched to acquire possession of all the copies of the Hebrew Canon, and the book of the Laws: Officers and Overseers were appointed to receive them: His Soldiery were dispatched into Judæa, to enforce the heathen worship, and erect Idols and Images in all and every Synagogue throughout the Kingdom and in the Temple of Jerusalem. Athenæus was appointed Overseer in Judæa, and in the exercise of his Commission, he first put a stop to all Sacrifices and the Service of the Temple; all Worship to the God of Israel ceased; the

the Jewish Religion was totally suppressed; the Temple was polluted with human blood, and the filthiest abominations; their Sabbaths by express command unobserved; their solemn fasts and feasts profaned; their children forbid to be circumcised; their Laws abolished: and whosoever was detected in the observance of a Jewish rite, was put to death on the Spot. The Statue of Jupiter was set up on the Altar of burnt offerings, and Heathen Worship was by force of arms impiously introduced and established throughout Judæa, in the City of Jerusalem and the Temple.

During this bloody and murderous persecution, for forty days together, there were seen over the City and the Temple, strange conflicts in the air, Horse-men and Foot-men armed with fiery shields, spears and swords, fighting and charging in battle array; and great Calamities, War and Desolation were foreboded by them.

Antiochus in his march through Palæstine, dispatched Appollonius, a Revenue Officer and well known to the Jews, at the head of 22,000 men to plunder all the Cities of Judah; his Commission ran, to put to death every man and send off the

Before Christ 168,

women

women and children for sale. Appollonius, the Jews supposed, was only come to collect the tribute money ; he had formerly been their tax gatherer. Appollonius waited peaceably till the next Sabbath, and while all was in profound quiet, he drew out his troops, commanding them to butcher all and every man they found : the Jews made no resistance, chusing to be thus slaughtered rather than break their Sabbath, by standing even on their own defence. Deserted and thus polluted the City of Jerusalem, and the Temple remained near four years ; such of the Jews, who escaped the Massacre, hid themselves in caverns and holds, amidst the craggy rocks, living on roots and wild herbs to avoid death, or what they thought a still greater evil, apostacy.

Mattathias, a Priest, who had retired with his children to a family estate at Modin, a learned pious and good man, zealous for the law of God was among the first who opposed the progress of this bloody persecution ; the overseer and his guard, knowing his respectabilty and influence were very urgent with him, and would fain have persuaded him to acquiesce, but Mattathias in the hearing of all the People, cried out aloud—no au-

Mattathias. Before Christ 167.

authority, no consideration should induce him, or his family to forsake the law of the God of Israel, they would walk in His covenant and observe His ordinances, the commands (he said) of no King on earth should force them to depart from their duty. Seeing at this instant, a Jew presenting himself before the heathen Altar, and worshipping an Idol there erected, with a religious zeal, Mattathias ran up to the apostate and slew him; his sons fired with the same spirit, with the resolution and zeal of the Father, stabbed the Overseer and all his men, overthrew the altar, and felled the Image to the ground, crying out, follow, all ye who are zealous for the law of God—follow, follow. Mattathias collecting his own family, and all who would and dared to join him, fled away to the deserts and mountains and there assembling, formed a little army, bold, resolute, zealous and brave.

The Syrian Monarch, seeing his orders not thoroughly conformed to in Judæa, marched thither in person to enforce their observance, and on this occasion, happened the martyrdom of good Eleazar, highly venerable and amiable, at ninety years of age, a Priest of great learning, probity and zeal for God, they led forth the good old man to the butchering scaffold, demanded from him a public recantation, the proof they required was, his eating the swine's flesh they brought him: with resolute
firmness

firmness and becoming resentment, abhorring the baseness and the insult, the venerable Priest preferred the sad alternative, a bloody and immediate execution.

After Eleazar the seven heroic youths, all brothers, together with their mother, were stretched on the rack, one after the other, enduring the most exquisite torments, with a courage and firmness almost incredible, whilst their highly spirited mother, divested of the weakness of her sex, stood by each of her suffering sons, assuring him and inspiring him with the glorious and near prospect of an Immortal reward; last of all, she was herself sacrificed to the Tyrant's fury, and died with the same intrepidity and resolution with which she had so nobly inspired her sons.

After Antiochus's return to Syria, Mattathias's party greatly increased, and as soon as they became powerful they left their fastnesses, caves and rocks, took the field, courageously entered the Cities, pulled down the Images and Heathen altars, caused the male children to be circumcised, and put to death the Syrian officers, the soldiery, and their apostatizing countrymen; after which they opened all the Synagogues, re-established the Jewish worship, and the solemnities of Sacrifice. Mattathias quite worn out with
the

the fore fatigues, exertions and warfare he had undergone, assembled his sons, and informed them God was punishing Judæa for the pride, oppression and impiety of the People:

“ But,” says he, “ be ye, my sons, valiant
 “ and zealous for the Law of the God of Israel,
 “ expose your lives in its defence, there is a
 “ glorious reward annexed to perseverance : Let
 “ me bring back to your memory the zeal, in-
 “ trepidity and spirit of your ancestors, to ani-
 “ mate your hope, and encourage you to a
 “ steady reliance on the power and the protec-
 “ tion of God.” Thus inspired, my dear chil-
 “ dren, and thus courageous in the defence of
 “ your Laws, your Liberties and your Religion,
 “ you will not, you cannot fail of success. My
 “ Son Simon has shewed himself a man of con-
 “ summate wisdom, follow his advice as a Father
 “ and a Counsellor ; Judas is well known for his
 “ valour and conduct, let him be your General,
 “ head your army and lead you out to battle.
 “ My valiant Sons, God Almighty prosper you
 “ and crown your valour with glory, honour and
 “ success.”

After this tender and affectionate interview, this his last leave and dying advice, Mattathias in a good old age expired, and they buried him

at

at Modin with his Ancestors ; and all the faithful wept.

Judas Maccabeus on the dying request and last directions of his Father, and the consent and appointment of his brothers, took on him the command of the forces, and erected his standard ; with distinguished valour he led them forth to battle, both against the Syrian Heathen, and such of their countrymen as had assented to their worship. Judas chose for a motto on his colours :

“ Who is like to thee among the Gods, O
“ Jehovah.”

In Hebrew the initials of the sentence make the word, Maccabees. His gallant troops consisting of men resolute and religious, grew every day more and more numerous, and quickly enabled him to pursue the plan and wise intentions of his Father, and he went round the cities of Judah, broke to pieces all the idols and their altars, and cut off the Idolaters, and Apostates. Judas set about repairing their fortifications, built them new fortresses and garrisoned them. After many signal, and some glorious and most astonishing victories, He drove out the Syrians from the

* Judas Maccabeus. Before Christ, 166.

city of Jerufalem and retook it: Heaps of rubbish covered the city; the fanctuary had lain long defolate; the houfes, palaces, and even the gates were burnt down, the altars and holy places profaned or demolifhed, and the grand area and court of the Sanctuary was over-run with briers. Judas and his men rent their cloaths, covered their heads with duft, and filled the air with lamentations, and tokens of the liveliest forrow. Judas employed all hands, he fet about cleaning and removing the rubbish both from the city and the temple, dedicating them all anew to the fervice of God; He appointed the priests, caufed a new altar to be erected; a golden table, an altar of incense, the golden candlestick were each of them made and replaced, and He allotted all his rich fpoils, and dedicated all his treasures to the fervice of the Temple. This folemn dedication lafted eight days, and was celebrated with great joy and illuminations at every man's door the whole time; whence it was called the Feaft of Lights, and was annually commemorated throughout the city. Judas governed the Jews with high fpirit, magnanimity and good conduct; he re-eftablifhed their religion, and advantaged the common wealth very greatly by a refpectful alliance with Rome: But after having fo bravely fought their battles, and encountered with many difficulties and difcouragements,

ments, this virtuous and very gallant General was slain in the field of battle, resolutely engaging with only eight hundred men, a most formidable army ; his own troops had on this occasion deserted him, and Judas sword in hand died fighting for his country. Jonathan and Simon his two brothers affectionately mourned over a fate so unfortunate, and honourably buried him at Modin, in the sepulchre of his Fathers. Under a government so threatened, amidst dangers and alarm, those of the Jews who still retained a love for their religion, and their country, assembled in a body, and elected Jonathan their General, desiring to fight under his standard, and invested him with the authority and powers of his late brother. Jonathan soon found himself at the head of a formidable party and a numerous army, and by his bravery and good conduct, he established himself and his government more and more every day.

A Civil War at this time broke out in Syria. Demetrius and Alexander were opponents ; both Princes endeavoured to gain Jonathan over to their party. Alexander sent his proposals first, He would appoint Jonathan to the dignity of the High-priesthood, and distinguish him by the title of the King's Friend, and he ordered him a

* Before Christ, 161.

W

pur-

purple robe, and a crown of gold, the ensigns of royalty. Demetrius resolved to outbid Alexander and he offered much more, but that Monarch's known enmity to the Jews, the oppression and sufferings they had already endured under him, made all his offers suspected, Jonathan dared not trust Demetrius, and therefore chose to enter into a treaty with his opponent. Jonathan invested himself with the dignity of the High-priesthood, and now for the first time put on the Pontifical Robes, after that high and sacred office had been wholly laid aside seven years, and for several descents it continued uninterruptedly in his family until the reign of Herod, when he changed it from an office of inheritance to that of arbitrary will and pleasure, and the High-priesthood was ever afterwards so held till the total extinction and abolition of it by the destruction of the Temple by the Romans.

Judas had some time before his death forwarded an Embassy to Rome; he had heard of the growing power of the Senate, their high prowess and wise policy, and he made an honourable and amicable alliance with them: In like manner, Jonathan after he had been appointed his successor, their General in a military capacity, and invested with the supreme authority of Church and State; He sent ambassadors
t o

to Rome to renew the league subsisting between them. They were received by the Senate with honour, and most respectfully sent back to Jerusalem. After Jonathan had thus established his Government and strengthened all his interests at home and abroad, He was basely ensnared and betrayed: by treachery Jonathan was strongly solicited to leave his Army, and with only a thousand of his brave soldiers to enter the city of Ptolemais, quite unsuspecting any ambush or fraud, Jonathan fell a sacrifice to the arts and insinuations of a Syrian Tyrant, the highly artful Tryphon. Bloody, scheming, and ambitious Tryphon ordered the gates of Ptolemais to be shut upon them, and every one of his men to be murdered. Jonathan himself was only spared until Tryphon had treacherously obtained a large Sum for his Ransom, as soon as ever the Messengers returned and he had got the money in his hands, Tryphon cruelly caused Jonathan to be massacred.

Jonathan had governed the Jews about seventeen years; as soon as the news of his base seizure and confinement, and the bloody slaughter of his brave troops had reached Jerusalem, the whole city was in an uproar; they every moment

* Before Christ, 141.

W 2

expected

expected the perfidious murderer at their gates, aided by a Syrian army, and their apostate countrymen ; under such distraction and high alarm they applied for succour and deliverance to Simon : Simon was the only one of all the sons of Mattathias now left, in the exigency of the moment, they elected Simon their General, summoned a council, instantly met and drew out his commission, as soon as ever it was signed, in a spirited and manly speech Simon thus addressed the court—

“ You, my Countrymen, are not ignorant how
 “ bravely my Father, Brothers, and I myself have
 “ fought in defence of our Laws and Religion,
 “ our Temple and our Nation ; they have sacri-
 “ ficed their lives and fortune in that glori-
 “ ous cause ; I, only I survive to maintain it ;
 “ God forbid I should value my life at a
 “ higher price than they did theirs : Behold
 “ me then as willing, as ready as they to glo-
 “ ry in the undertaking, to die in defence of
 “ our Nation, our Temple, our Wives and our
 “ Children.”

With loud Huzzas the People all proclaimed him their Commander and General, and Simon assumed the sacred office and dignity of the
 Priest-

Priesthood ; Simon sent and procured the bones of Jonathan and the bones of his two sons who had been murdered with him, and buried them in the sepulchre of his ancestors at Modin, and erected a stately monument to their memory. As soon as possible Simon forwarded Ambassadors to Rome, and to such other Courts, as were in alliance with him. The Senate respectfully ordered out the Tribunes, and a body of their citizens to meet the Jewish Ambassadors as soon as they came near the City, and they honourably received them, gave them an immediate audience, renewing the league made with his predecessors. The Senate ordered its ratification to be engraved on tables of brass, had it carried along with them to Jerusalem, and Simon caused the instrument of Alliance publicly to be read before all the People. The Ambassadors sent to Lacedæmon and their other Allies returned with authentic instruments of their readiness also, to ratify all their former treaties with Judæa.

The Priests, Elders, Magistrates and People, held at this time a general convocation and assembled at Jerusalem ; it was agreed at this august meeting purposely convened, that the supreme government of the Nation and the dignity of the High-priesthood should be both settled and confirmed

ed on Simon and on his posterity after him, thus making them hereditary in his family; a Public instrument was drawn out and signed, wherein the heroic actions of his ancestors, and Simon's good deeds were recognized and honourably mentioned, in grateful acknowledgement for all which the Heads, Chiefs and Elders of Israel, constituted and elected him their Prince and High Priest, both which dignities were by this national Charter to descend to his posterity. A copy of the act was engraven on brass, and hung up in the Sanctuary, the original deposited in the treasury of the Temple, among the sacred archives and records of Judæa.

Simon took on him the state, stile and authority of Prince as well as High-Priest, and both dignities became henceforward hereditary in his family, who were sovereign Pontiffs and sovereign Princes of the Jewish Nation. Being thus established in the independent sovereignty of Judæa, Simon set out on a general circuit throughout his Kingdom, He consulted for its security, repaired the fortresses and built many new ones, he fortified the walls, provided himself with magnificent apartments for all his household and family, and made Jerusalem his place of residence and where he kept his court; his son John (afterwards named Hyrcan) well skilled in military prowess, valiant and brave, he appointed

appointed Captain-general over all the forces of Judæa.

Simon maintained his Government and high dignities eight years. At this time he set out on another tour, a progress through the cities of Judah, in order to regulate whatever he found amiss, and provide for the comfort and security of all his people; two of his sons Judas and Mattathias accompanied him, at the gates of the City of Jericho, they were met by Ptolemy the Governor; Ptolemy had married his daughter, and he dutifully and respectfully invited them to the Castle, where he had ordered an entertainment. Simon and his two sons pleased with his courtesy and suspecting no evil, readily accepted his invitation, and they all drove up to the Governor's apartments. Ptolemy had perfidiously laid a plan for the government of Judæa, ambitious and vain he had for this purpose concerted all his schemes with the court of Syria, in order to accomplish which, he plotted the destruction of his Father-in-law, and both his sons, most inhumanly after dinner when his guests were in high joy, and in the midst of their carousals, he brought forth his murderers, whom he had secreted, and assassinated all three, while they were still sitting at the banquet. The young Governor then instantly dispatched a party
to

to Gazara, the residence of John, who was Captain-general of the forces of Judæa, in order to murder him; but John had luckily received timely notice of what had been done at Jericho, and he courageously sallied out on the party, and cut them all to pieces.

John on seeing his danger set off instantly and made the best of his way to Jerusalem; young Ptolemy (Governor of Jericho) arrived as soon as He, and they both presented themselves at different gates, and demanded admittance. From the high respect they bore the Father and Ancestors, John was with open arms received, whilst the murderer of Simon and the two young Princes had the mortification of being repulsed with all his bloody followers.

Assuming now the name of Hyrcan, John was publicly proclaimed Prince of Judæa, and High-Priest in his Father's stead. He headed his army, fortified himself on the mountain near the Temple, and provided for his own safety and his People's. Ptolemy chagrined and sorely disappointed returned back with his army, and laid all his sufferings and disgrace before the court of Syria. Thus was the city of Jerusalem and the

John Hyrcan,

Temple

Temple happily preserved, and peace restored in the moment of danger, consternation and alarm. Hyrcan assumed the stile of Prince and the dignity of the High-priesthood, and employed his utmost care, wisdom, and diligence in providing for the safety and establishing the peace and happiness of the Nation. In the eighth year of his sovereignty Hyrcan sent an embassy to Rome, to renew the league made with Simon his Father, the Senate respectfully complied, received the Jewish Ambassadors with honour, ordered their expences to be paid from their own treasury, and they gave them honourary letters of recommendation to all the States through which they were to pass. Hyrcan † and all his Court were so pleased with the politeness of the Senate, and the honours they had done them, that they sent another embassy the year following, returned them thanks, and presented them with a magnificent cup and a shield of gold of great value; the Senate graciously accepted both presents, ratified and confirmed to the Jews their privildges, and the league of amity and alliance, before granted, and already recorded in the archives of Rome.

Hyrcan was thus securely established and settled

† 127.

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in his dominions, whilst his two powerful neighbours Syria and Egypt were distracted with broils at home, and war abroad. Having added Samaria and Galilee, to the territories of Judah, the Jewish Prince became more and more formidable, and he kept possession of both as long as he lived. Hyrcan's Wisdom and Prudence in Council at home, and his Bravery and Conquests abroad distinguishingly honoured and signalized his Reign. The Commonwealth and the Jewish Religion recovered their glory more at this period than at any other since their Captivity and return from Babylon. Three high and signal dignities were all, at one and the same time enjoyed by Hyrcan, Royalty—the Priest-hood—and the gift of Prophecy, and he retained them nine and twenty years. This Prince was so excessively fond of his two eldest sons, he avoided naming either his Successor. His third son, Alexander, he took a dislike to, in a Vision, Hyrcan said, this son had been pointed out to him as the one, who would succeed to his Government, but Hyrcan never took one step to prevent his supplanting his elder brothers: He left indeed five sons, Aristobulus, Antigonus, Alexander, a fourth unknown and un-namand, and Absalom who was his youngest. In the latter end of his life, this amiable Prince was most insolently and maliciously

ciously treated by the haughty Pharisees, a sect he had honoured and highly favoured, but on their growing so arrogant, aspiring and mutinous, Hyrcan totally deserted their party and refused to meet them, much civil commotion and troubles his shyness occasioned, and Hyrcan died the year after they had begun, many insults he bore, and many sufferings he endured which embittered his life, and very probably shortened it.

According to the Jewish Law established by Moses, Aristobulus as his eldest son assumed his Father's dignities and government, but he lived in a habit of so much love and friendship with his brother Antigonus, that he admitted him from the first to share the Government with him. The other three brothers, Aristobulus commanded to be kept close prisoners. Hyrcan's widow at this time presented a petition and sent a message to her son, informing him, by the will of his Father she had been appointed to the Sovereignty, upon which message, Aristobulus caused his mother to be immediately sent under a guard into confinement, and she was there cruelly starved to death.

Aristobulus assumed the title of King and he wore a royal diadem.

As soon as he had established his household and family concerns, He headed his army and marched them into Iturea, wasting all the country and laying siege to its cities. It happened in the midst of his victories and successes, Aristobulus was taken ill, and obliged to be brought back in a litter to Jerusalem, his brother Antigonus was left behind to complete the conquest of the Province: the King's sickness grew worse, and appeared to threaten his life, his Courtiers were jealous of his brother Antigonus, and they secretly excited a like jealousy in the King, and among the first who studiously fomented it was the Queen. On Antigonus's return with his army to Jerusalem, he immediately marched on to the Temple in martial array, accompanied with his guards and without staying even to take off his armour, piously to return thanks to God for his successes, and offer up his prayers and vows for his brother's recovery: Antigonus's conduct and warlike dress, were represented to the sick King as an attempt upon his government, and even on his life, too easily he gave credit to the rumour and suspicion, and the King sent a message to his brother desiring to see him in his

bed-

bed-chamber, but requested him first of all to take off his armour, he laid so great a stress on this request, as to inform Antigonus an omission in this point would be imputed to him as treason.

After this express command, and the messengers were returned, the Queen sat down and wrote him a letter, that the King having just then been told of the elegance and beauty of his armour, his Majesty had altered his mind, and now was waiting to see him before he pulled his armour off, or changed any part of his dress. In passing through the gallery to the King's bed-chamber the guards slew Antigonus. The assassination most violently agitated the King, He was soon made acquainted with the circumstances, and undeceived about them, Aristobulus reflected with the keenest remorse, both on his brother's death, and on the still more cruel murder of his Mother: the bitter anguish, hurry and distraction brought on a vomiting of blood, in carrying out the basin with the blood across the gallery the basin was broke and the blood was mixed with the yet streaming blood of his brother. Aristobulus on hearing a bustle was informed of the accident and he very soon after expired.

The

The Queen instantly sent to the prison and released his brother Alexander, and caused him immediately to be proclaimed and enthroned.

Alexander's reign began with signing the sentence for the execution of his fourth brother, he was accused and suspected of some treasonable attempt upon the government.

Absolom the youngest no doubt intimidated by such severity, expressed his being contented to lead a private life, and he was taken under the protection of the King as long as he lived.

Alexander was a spirited, very subtle and warlike Prince. The troubles of Syria still subsisted, intestine broils distracted the Empire, two contending brothers disputed for supremacy, Alexander availed himself of their quarrel, and He marched a powerful army to Ptolemais, but he was not successful, for hearing his own kingdom was threatened and in danger, he was forced to return back in order to protect it.

Alexander afterwards led his forces across the river Jordan, and he took the fortress of Gadara and some valuable towns and fortresses about it.

Before Christ 105. Alexander.

The Pharisees at this time grew more and more tumultuous, and they occasioned him a great deal of trouble ; invidious and turbulent, they were exasperating all the People against their Prince, and while Alexander was officiating in his holy function and in his Pontifical robes, on a high festival, they pelted stones at him in the Temple ; insults so impious and at such a season occasioned an universal riot and confusion. Alexander instantly suspended the ceremonies, He assumed the General and all his wonted spirit ; He ordered in his Guards, and before he could quell the tumult, no less than six thousand of his People were slain. A genius so warlike kept Alexander always in full employ, and principally from home. He was highly successful in his arms, obtained many glorious and very signal Victories, and often returned in triumph to Jerusalem amidst the loudest acclamations of his People. At length, having less to do, Alexander sunk into debauchery and drinking, an obstinate quartan ague was by this means brought on, and it never left him as long as he lived ; totally exhausted with fatigue, disease and intemperance, and yet from his love of arms, even at this time, encamped before the Castle of Regada, to which he had laid close siege. Alexander died in the
Camp,

Camp, in the twenty-seventh year of his reign, and the forty-ninth of his age. He left two sons Hyrcan and Aristobulus, but by his Will he bequeathed his Government to his wife Alexandra during her life, and afterwards to the son she should then make choice of.

Alexandra in a flood of tears expressed to her dying Husband her just dread and apprehensions from the Pharisees, and they were a very powerful sect at that time in Jerusalem: Alexander listened to her with great emotion, and he employed his last moments in contriving the most salutary expedient for removing them: after he had thought on the subject, Alexander told her,

“ You are not unacquainted with the cause of
 “ our mutual enmity, I am well aware your security and happiness, when I am dead, must rise
 “ or fall, as you make them your friends or foes:
 “ I advise you therefore to keep my death a secret from the army, ’till they have taken the
 “ Fort—then lead them in triumph to Jerusalem
 “ —carry my body with you, and as soon as you
 “ come thither, assemble the Heads and principal Leaders of the Sect, and lay it before them,
 “ tell them you submit it wholly to them, after
 “ the injuries it had done them, to give it burial
 “ or cast it ignominiously on the high-ways; as
 “ for

“ for your part, you are devoted to them, they
 “ shall always be your first advisers, at the head
 “ of your council, you will do nothing without
 “ their consent and approbation, begin instantly
 “ shewing them some marks of your favour and
 “ friendship, upon which they will order my bo-
 “ dy a royal burial, and support you and your
 “ sons in the peaceful enjoyment of the kingdom.

Upon this wise advice and Alexander's last directi-
 ons Alexandra assumed the Government, ingrati-
 ated herself with that powerful sect, enlisted under
 their banner, and she invested Hyrcan her eldest
 son with the High-priesthood.

Alexandra reigned nine years, and died in the
 seventy-third year of her age, leaving by will
 the whole Government to the High Priest.
 Aristobulus, the youngest son, from the death
 of his Mother, resolved to oppose his brother
 Hyrcan; He set up his standard, headed a for-
 midable army, and marched them to the Plain
 of Jericho; a most desperate battle was here
 fought, and almost all of Hyrcan's forces that re-
 mained went over to Aristobulus. Hyrcan had
 only time to fly to Jerusalem; he here shut him-
 self up with a small Party in the Citadel, and was

Before Christ 79. Alexandra. Hyrcan the Second,

Before Christ 69. Aristobulus the Second.

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glad

glad to accept of any terms and offers of Peace he could procure.

Aristobulus divested him immediately both of his Regal and Pontifical dignities, commanding him to resign them up to him, and retire to a distance from the capital and a private station. Hyrcan had only possessed his royalties three months, and he was under the necessity of giving up without more opposition and delay, what he found it totally impracticable to retain.

Aristobulus thus ascended the throne of his Father, but he enjoyed its honours very little, nor indeed the government long. Antipater father of Herod, who had been appointed to the government of Idumea, very soon after this, brought Aretas into Judæa. Aretas was an Arabian Prince, and he headed an army of five thousand men to espouse the cause and interests of Hyrcan; Aristobulus collecting all his forces, marched out to meet him, a most obstinate battle ensued, but Victory was declared for Aretas, Aristobulus, totally defeated, fled for refuge to Jerusalem, closely pursued by Aretas, who entered the Metropolis without opposition, and drove him into the Temple, to which he laid close siege, and surrounded it with his army. All Jerusalem declared for the conqueror.

Aristo-

Aristobulus thus totally forsaken and blocked up, was compelled to have recourse to the Romans. The two brothers Hyrcan and Aristobulus applied both at the same time to Scaurus the Roman General, and they both of them offered him a bribe of four hundred talents; Scaurus declared for Aristobulus, and he wrote a letter to Aretas, the Arabian Prince, commanding him to withdraw his troops instantly from Jerusalem or Pompey (he said) would march his army against him, and publicly proclaim Arabia, the Enemy of Rome. Aretas not daring to provoke a Roman General, led his troops out of Judæa, upon which Scaurus marched on with his army to Damascus.

Aristobulus thus timely relieved, assembled all the forces he could raise and pursued Aretas, he overtook him and his brother Hyrcan, and obtained a complete victory, killed seven thousand of their troops, and amongst them a General-officer, brother to Antipater. It was soon after this, that Pompey marched himself with his army to Damascus.

To grace and honour a Roman Chief, Pompey was here respectfully met by the Ambassadors from all the neighbouring states, Judæa, Syria and Egypt, and during this excursion no less than twelve Kings came in person, courteously to pay

him homage. Pompey had been informed of the competition between the two brothers, and He commanded Hyrcan and Aristobulus both to appear before him. A court was convened, before which, each brother pleaded his own right to the Jewish Republic. Pompey was setting out on an expedition against Arabia, he declined therefore deciding in favour of either until his return.

Aretas, the Arabian Prince, had in some instance neglected to pay due honour to the Roman arms, but he was highly alarmed as soon as ever he saw them at his doors. Aretas on the frontiers of his kingdom submissively met Pompey and paid him homage, notwithstanding his respectful subjection, in martial array Pompey entered Arabia, marched his troops up to Petra, took possession of the capital, and placed a Roman guard over the King, afterwards on his renewed offers of submission, and assenting fully to the terms of the Conqueror, Aretas obtained his release and Pompey with the Roman army returned back to Damascus. The news of Aristobulus's revolt and opposition was here told to Pompey: while He was in Arabia, the Jewish Prince had left Damascus, he was returned to Judæa: Aristobulus had there fortified himself, and shut himself up. The Roman Chief instantly marched his army against him, and entered Judæa: Aris-
tobulus

tobulus was posted at the entrance in a fortress of immense strength—Pompey commanded him down; the King's friends, highly awed, persuaded him to obey—He did so.—Admitted to an audience, He held a conversation with Pompey, after which Aristobulus was told he might go back to his fortress. Several parleys were afterwards assented to in hopes of inducing Pompey to decide in his favour, but Aristobulus grew suspicious, and he carefully garrisoned all his strong places and prepared for a vigorous defence. Pompey learned what he had been doing, obtained another meeting, and obliged him to put all those strong Holds by way of sequestration into his hands, and he compelled him instantly to sign orders for so doing, to all his Governors, and the Keepers of those fortresses. Alarmed, incensed, dispirited, Aristobulus hastened to Jerusalem; Pompey followed close at his heels, he encamped his army at Jericho, and then marched forward to the capital. Aristobulus came out submissively to meet Pompey, and made him an offer of an immense sum of money: His offer was accepted, and while Aristobulus was yet with him, Pompey sent Gabinius, his Lieutenant-general with a proper guard to receive the money. On his approach to the City gates, He found them shut, and Gabinius was told from the walls, the citizens would not assent

assent to the agreement. Pompey ordered Aristobulus in irons; with his whole army He advanced to the City-gates; a division within weakned all its powers; two opposite parties contending; Hyrcan's party at length prevailed, and threw them open; the adherents to Aristobulus retreated and fortified themselves in the Temple, and on Mount Moriah. Pompey and his guards, and his whole army marched through the City and laid close siege to the Temple: The place held out three months against them all; at length a huge Tower was thrown down, and so great a part of the wall fell with it, a breach was made large enough for an assault; the place was taken sword in hand, but so bloody the slaughter that more than twelve thousand were slain. Pompey and his General-officers now entered the Temple, and what to a pious Jew appeared most sacrilegious, even the Holy of Holies: He cast a curious eye on the golden Table for the shew bread, the Candlestick, the magnificent Censers, lamps, and other golden vessels and all the rich perfumes, but inspired with a sacred awe, and the solemnities of the place, he did not even touch any one of them: To make them all the amends in his power, Pompey ordered them to purify the Temple, and on the very next day its usual services were

were resumed. Thus an end was put to the bloody quarrel and contention of the two brothers. Pompey ordered the city-walls to be demolished, He re-established Hyrcan on the Jewish throne, and imposed on him an annual tribute to Rome.

Aristobulus and his two sons were sent under a guard to the Roman camp, to add to the high honours and glory of his triumph. A decree was afterwards made by the Senate, in favour of Hyrcan, assigning to him and his posterity the High-priesthood and Sovereignty of Judæa, and at the same time Antipater was appointed to a high office in the Government, called Procurator : Hyrcan the following year sent to Rome and presented a petition to the Senate requesting leave to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and it was immediately granted him.

Thus Hyrcan presided over Judæa, till a total change some time after took place in the Government. By authority from the Senate, Gabinius a Roman General entered Judæa with his army, and demolished some of its strongest fortresses, to prevent hereby the means and power of a future revolt : Gabinius after this divided the province

Before Christ 63, Hyrcan the Second Restored.

into

into five districts, and erected a court of judicature in each: Jerusalem, Gadara, Amath, Jericho and Sephoris in Galilee. An Aristocracy was thus established, and the Jews hereby brought totally under subjection to the Romans. Hyrcan was continued by the appointment of the Senate in the sacred office and dignity of the Priesthood.

Crassus, a Roman General, was now sent from Rome to succeed Gabinus as Governor of Judæa: A standing army was established, and the Roman Arms preserved the Country in profound peace. The ruling passion of Crassus the new Governor was avarice, and the first exercise of his Authority was a high indulgence and gratification of it. Crassus plundered the Temple and carried off the solid beams of gold, magnificent vessels, utensils and golden tables, and they amounted to more, than two million of our money. Crassus soon after marched his army from hence to Parthia, where he lost his life; and Cassius another Roman General, at that time in Syria was commissioned to collect all of the Roman army that was dispersed throughout that Empire and to march with them into Judæa and succeed Crassus in his Government.

Before Christ 54.

Crassus.

Cassius.

Three

Three years after this Julius Cæsar assumed the Sovereignty of Rome, and a civil war soon ensuing, when Cæsar and Pompey were competitors, the Jews had a little time to recruit themselves; the General appointed by the Senate to command that part of their army employed in Syria and Judæa, had been highly successful in all his expeditions, and he wrote to Rome an account of his victories, candidly attributing the glory of his successes to Antipater's information bravery and good conduct; in all his letters both to Cæsar and the Senate, he never failed to pass the greatest encomiums on the Jewish Commander,

Upon this Cæsar constituted Antipater a Citizen of Rome, Lieutenant and Procurator of Judæa; and when the Emperor visited Jerusalem, Antipater used his utmost efforts to reconcile the minds of the People to the new Government, highly extolling the Emperor, the grandeur and amazing power of the Empire, exhorting the Jews to a prudent and cheerful submission and obedience: for ROME (he said) would always be obeyed.

ESSAY XIX.

ON
THE LIFE AND REIGN
OF
HEROD.

TH E many and signal Services of Antipater, and the Assistance he, from time to time, had given the Roman Army, when stationed in Syria and Judæa, gained him much respect and attracted the notice of the Senate, who voted him the freedom of their City, investing the Jewish Commander with the honours and privileges of a Roman Citizen.

Herod

Herod his youngest Son was first promoted to the TETRARCHY of Galilee, and afterwards obtained an appointment in Cæle-Syria, and a promise of the Government of Judæa.

While Rome was engaged in domestic quarrels and the Triumvirs were contending for Empire, more particularly during the commotions and civil discord among the friends of Mark Antony and Octavianus, Fulvia (his Wife) died and Antony put a stop to all further differences by marrying Octavia. These Nuptials were celebrated at Rome with great Splendour and Magnificence.

It was soon after, that Judæa again became a Scene of bloodshed and distraction. The Supreme Authority had been as yet chiefly vested in the High-Priest. Pacorus, Prince of Parthia, entered into a convention with Antigonus, a younger Son of Aristobulus, who was now laying his claim and contending for the Jewish Crown. Antigonus promised the young Prince, in case he settled him in the Government and restored him to the Throne of his Father, a reward of a thousand Talents, and to inspire the youthful Hero and his party, with zeal and gallantry, he offered to present to Parthia five hundred of the fairest of the Jewish Women.

As soon as this Agreement was ratified, Antigonus set about raising an Army and was joined by Pacorus himself, at the Head of the Parthians, the two Armies surrounded the Citadel, took possession of the Palace, by force of Arms and partly by bribes and treachery (at length) they became Masters of Jerusalem, Hyrcan the High-Priest and Phasaël (a Brother of Herod's) they loaded with irons, and Herod to avoid a like fate, stole away by night, and brought off with him his Mother, and Sister and all his Family, together with such of his effects as he could carry with him, and a part of the Army under his command, they all made the best of their way to Massada, an almost impregnable Castle and the strongest Fortress in the Kingdom, there Herod secured his treasures and placed his Family, he furnished the Garrison with ammunition and implements of War, laid in a store of Provision for several months, appointed his Brother Joseph Governor, and left him with eight hundred Men to defend it. Herod with the remainder of his followers fled from hence to Petra, Metropolis of Arabia, but Malchus the Arabian Prince, although his friend, would afford him no refuge or assistance whatever, the King even sent Messengers to meet him, commanding Herod to quit the Country with all his Party, alledging that Parthia had forbid his receiving them or admitting their stay.

On

On this disappointment, Herod was under a necessity of dismissing many of his men, and he now made the best of his way for Egypt, at Rhinocorura the sad news was brought him of the death of his Brother Phasael, who knowing his sentence and fate to be determined on, in order to prevent the horror and disgrace of a publick execution, Phasael the night before, beat out his own brains against the Prison wall.

Herod proceeded on to Pelusium, and thence to Alexandria, where he embarked on board a vessel, and sailed by the way of Rhodes and Brandusium to Rome.

Immediately on his arrival, Herod waited on Mark Antony and then on Octavianus. He informed them both of the sad distractions of the Jewish State, of the Parthian Army, and the invasion and revolution in Jerusalem. A remembrance of his Father's services and friendship, and a large sum of money which he offered, so won upon them both, that they frankly promised him their interest and assistance. Mark Antony espoused his cause much more warmly than Herod ever expected, or even once thought off, he only meant to solicit the Government for Aristobulus, a very young Prince, the Brother
of

of his beloved Mariamne, and a Grandson of Hyrcan's.

Antony convened a Senate, to which he gave orders that Herod should be introduced, and contrived to have him led into Court between Messala and Atratinus, two Noble Senators of Rome and their first Orators. In a studied and graceful speech, they opened the Jewish cause, by recognizing the friendship, bravery, the many and eminent services of Antipater and his Family, and degradingly contrasting them with their Rival, representing Antigonus as a Usurper seditious and turbulent, an avowed Enemy to Rome, and he had accepted the Jewish Crown from Parthia.

After an eloquent and spirited harangue Antigonus, at this very meeting, was declared and publicly voted an Enemy to Rome, and Herod by the unanimous voice of the Senate was elected King of Judæa. A decree was instantly made out, passed the usual forms, was entered on their register and deposited in the Archives of the State.

Herod, King of Judæa, with his laurel Crown, between Mark Antony and Octavianus, in Sovereignty and Majesty was conducted to the
Palace

Palace, followed by the Tribunes, the Consuls and Senators of Rome, and Antony feasted the Court with great munificence and splendour.

Thus Herod became invested with Royalty, and seven days after his inauguration, he set out on his return, and sailed with all his party from Brandusium to Ptolemais.

Ventidius, the Roman General stationed in Syria, had marched with his Army into Judæa and drove out the Parthians, after which he encamped in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and there accepted a bribe from Antigonus. Herod, soon after his landing and making known his honours, raised a powerful Army at Ptolemais, all Galilee repaired to the standard of Herod; the King soon found himself strong enough to march against Antigonus, and relieve Maffada, to which he had lain close siege. On Herod's arrival they abandoned the Fortrefs, and the Jewish Prince was most joyfully received by his Family. From hence Herod marched his Army into Samaria and soon after consummated his marriage with Mariamne, to whom he had been betrothed four years before; a Princess of exquisite beauty, amiable accomplishments and the most exalted virtues, the Daughter of Alexandra and Grand-Daughter to Hyrcan.

By

By this time Mark Antony's letters from Rome had reached Ventidius with exprefs orders, and the commands of the Senate, to affist the Jewish King with all his Forces. Herod's own Army every day encreased, and he was resolute and courageous enough to march them against Jerusalem. Herod encamped with his Army and sat down before it, but his most vigorous efforts failed him, and Herod here endured a harrassing and tedious disappointment; at length (on the King's request) Antony dispatched Machærus, another General Officer, with two Legions and a Body of Cavalry to his assistance, notwithstanding all which, it was the year following, and after so close a siege as to occasion a famine, that Herod's Army, together with the Roman, effected a breach in the walls and took the strong Hold of Jerusalem by storm.

The Roman Soldiers furiously rushed into the City, plundering and ravaging with a most terrible and bloody slaughter. Herod used every means in his power to oppose it, and at last told the Roman General, if the butchery was not put a stop to, Rome would make him King of a Wilderness, and his success would prove his greatest misery; but the City had been taken by assault, and the Roman General said, he did not know how to forbid it. Herod was under the necessity
of

of bribing them largely to desist, and with the utmost difficulty and exertion of his power and influence, he did at last happily put an end to the carnage.

The siege had lasted six months, Antigonus loaded with heavy chains was led away under a Roman Guard, and by Socius a General Officer delivered up to Antony. Mark Antony was very desirous of reserving the deposed Prince to grace the honours of his triumph, but Herod, fearing every thing from a Rival, unweariedly kept petitioning his death, and at last by the offer of a large bribe prevailed on the Roman Chief to pass sentence on Antigonus, and he ordered him out to an ignominious and shameful execution; this young Prince was treated as a private criminal, sent to Antioch, there tied to a whipping post, publicly, and disgracefully lashed, and afterwards beheaded.

By contempt, and such an unprecedented mode of punishing a Crowned head, Antony intended to render the memory of this Prince despised by the Jews, thought it a probable means of supporting his generous friend, and putting a check to present tumults and future revolts in Judæa.

Forty Years before Christ.

VOL. II.

O

Possession

Possession of Jerusalem and the death of Antigonus, who was the last of the Asmonean Family, established Herod on the Jewish Throne. His treasury had been quite exhausted, and there was yet a powerful party which bore him irreconcilable hatred. Herod was therefore under a necessity (as he thought) of beginning his reign with vigour and even with oppression and bloodshed. As soon therefore as he had well settled himself in Jerusalem, he collected together all the gold, silver, and valuables of his Citizens, he ordered it all to be carried to his treasury and the plate to be melted down, and hereby he soon amassed an immense property.

Herod next seized on all the estates of the Revolutionists, and on the persons of those who had espoused the cause of Antigonus, many of them he put to death and he placed a guard over their houses, and the King commanded them to examine every coffin, inspect if they were really dead, and that no part of the family Treasure was conveyed away with the bodies.

Herod maintained a jealousy respecting Hyrcan, he had obtained the same honours from Rome, for he had also been invested by the Senate with the Supreme Authority. Hyrcan had escaped with his life, but to incapacitate him in future for the Pontifical function,

Antigonus

Antigonus had caused both his ears to be cut off, and the Parthian Prince, in order to prevent fresh insurrections had carried the unfortunate High-Priest away with him. Hyrcan was now in Babylon, he had been there politely received by Phaartes the Parthian King, and treated with great respect and reverence. The High Priest-hood was disposed of by Herod to Ananel, an obscure Priest not likely to interfere with the Government of his Prerogative. Notwithstanding Hyrcan's situation, such was his love and partiality for his Country, and such his innocence and confidence in the friendship of the King, that he was anxiously impatient and wishing much to spend the remainder of his life in Jerusalem. His friends would fain have dissuaded him, alledging the folly and great hazard of putting himself in Herod's Power, and the honour, safety and happiness, he was peacefully enjoying at Babylon.

Herod highly artful and politic, sent first to Hyrcan a friendly invitation, he was now settled in his Government and earnestly requested him to partake of his Sovereignty and of the honours of his station, as a grateful return of former friendship. Herod accompanied his invitation with a rich present to the Parthian King, asking his Majesty's leave for his venerable

able friend, to return and end his days at Jerufalem, Herod fent alfo presents to fome of the Parthian Nobility, Men of influence and dignity at Court, engaging them in favour of his Suit. Whilft this was negociating, Herod on fome pretence or other, contrived to quarrel with Alexandra Daughter of Hyrcan, and Mother of his beloved Mariamne, and he ordered her to be confined to her Palace at Jericho, and placed a guard over her. Alexandra watched her opportunity, conveyed a letter to Cleopatra, the celebrated Egyptian Queen, it informed her, of her sad fituation, and Herod's cruelty ; upon which, the Queen invited her into Egypt, and Alexandra wanted very little perfuafion to accept it, the difficulty was, how to get away and conceal her efcape. She difpatched a faithful fervant to hire a vefſel, and another was entrusted with the greateſt ſecreſy to procure two coffins, one for herſelf, and another for her Son Ariſtobulus—thus they were both to be conveyed and put aboard the ſhip. Herod was apprized of their whole deſign, he admitted them to be carried out of the Palace, and when they had got half-way he cauſed them to be arreſted and brought back to Jericho. The reſentment of the Egyptian Queen Herod dreaded, and he now cauſiouſly turned his thoughts to moderate it ; ſhe was a formidable

formidable neighbour, a Rival at Rome, and high in
 the favour of Antony. Herod therefore put on
 the Mask of kindness and Clemency, and with
 wonderful Art even brought on an onward recon-
 ciliation, but from that moment he resolved to get
 rid of Aristobulus the young Prince. Immediately
 upon this Change in her Affairs, Alexandra
 renewed her applications to Herod for her Son;
 Ananel was a Babylonish Priest, and her haughty
 Spirit could not bear the indignity of his filling
 the Pontifical Chair, a Station and pre-eminence
 belonging only to Aristobulus. Her incessant
 and unwearied applications at length prevailed,
 Herod admitted her plea, but he plainly fore-
 saw that the young Prince had an equal right and
 claim on the Crown. Herod deposed Ananel,
 and Aristobulus was appointed to the High-Priest-
 hood. A most highly pleasing and elegant youth
 and only seventeen; Herod told Alexandra he
 had really intended the Priest-hood for her Son,
 and Ananel had only supplied his place, until
 he should arrive at an age corresponding with the
 sacred office and dignity. When Aristobulus,
 arrayed in his pontifical robes, officiated at the
 Altar, the People stood astonished at his elegant,
 graceful and Majestic figure, he was the general
 talk of all, they beheld in him, the worth and
 splendour of his Ancestors again revived, and they
 filled the Temple and the City with his praise,

Thirty-five Years before Christ.

As

As soon as the Feast of Tabernacles was over, Herod and Aristobulus set out together on a visit to Jericho, Alexandra had invited them both to a sumptuous entertainment, the weather was hot, and it was proposed to Aristobulus to bathe in an elegant basin in the neighbourhood, Herod had engaged two villains, who leaped in, and kept the young Prince under water until he was quite dead. The murderous deed was, as much as possible, disguised and glossed over. Herod affected the deepest sorrow, put on a mourning dress, ordered a most magnificent funeral, and a stately monument to his memory. Upon this dark event, Ananel was restored to the office of the High-Priesthood. Notwithstanding all his art, Herod was well known to have been the murderer of Aristobulus, and the transaction and infamy made him truly odious to the People. Poor Alexandra, his distracted Mother, was with great difficulty prevented from laying violent hands on herself; in her calmer moments, when she could reason with less despair, she considered her life might avenge the death of her Son, and bring about the ruin of his murderer; she wrote a sorrowful and passionate letter to Cleopatra, and the Queen, from motives of ambition rather than from pity and a sense of the horror of the crime, wrote herself a letter to Antony who was then at Rome, severely accusing
and

and soliciting with seeming earnestness the Punishment of Herod, and she was not without hopes of obtaining even a grant of his Kingdom.

It was not long after this, the Egyptian Queen with her gay bark in Princely pomp, set sail on a journey to meet her Antony, the Royal Lovers met and agreed to make some stay at Laodicea. Antony sent an express to Jerusalem commanding Herod to meet him there. Herod did not disobey his patron, much against his will he set out, but he carried with him an immense bribe which purchased him both an honourable reception and a sure acquittal. Antony satisfied the avarice of Cleopatra by presenting her with the Province of Cæle-Syria. On Herod's journey into Syria, having reasons for suspecting his safety, and that he was going to be tried for his life, he left express orders at home, to put to death his beloved wife, the highly beautiful Mariamne, in case they should hear of a decision against him. Herod knew the fame of her beauty had long reached Rome, and to have left such charms in possession of a Rival, even after his death, was more dreadful to him than any sufferings whatever.

Thirty-four Years before Christ.

Mariamne

Mariamne was apprized of the bloody orders, she had wrested out the Secret. Mariamne and Alexandra were met, in order to consult how they should revenge themselves on Herod, when the News of the Kings death was currently spread in the City, Antony (they said) had put Herod to death. The Queen and Alexandra immediately desired a guard to conduct them to the Roman Eagle, this was the standard of safety erected near Jerusalem, but in the midst of their preparations, Letters arrived from Herod. Herod had gained his cause, and Mark Antony was heaping on him a profusion of honours, adding daily new strength and Vigour to his Government, Antony had appointed him one of his Privy Council, and was regaling him at his most splendid Entertainments.

Upon Herod's return Salome informed her brother of what had happened, and secretly insinuated Mariamne had been practising strange familiarities with his brother Joseph. The virtuous Mariamne, at her very first interview easily cleared her Innocence, but she could not help mentioning to Herod, the bloody and cruel orders he had left respecting herself and her Mother, and she strikingly told him, it was a savage mark of his barbarity.

The

The detection stabbed the jealous tyrant to the heart, he instantly concluded nothing less than criminality could have extorted the fatal Secret. In the first sallies of his fury, he would have stabbed Mariamne, now excess of Love and now resentment alternately distracted him, Herod instantly ordered his Brother Joseph to execution, and he caused Alexandra to be confined in a dungeon and put her in irons, as a promoter of the mischief and the plot.

Cleopatra returning with Antony from the Euphrates, about this time crossed over Judæa. Herod was highly provoked by the insults and Avarice of the Queen, she had attempted his ruin, wrote to Antony to remove him, and had actually obtained, from Rome, the revenue of the fertile territories of Jericho, the richest and pleasanter of all Judæa, and by far the most valuable. Herod highly artful knew how to conceal his disgust, he entertained her with the greatest splendour and magnificence, while he was all the time, secretly contriving to put her to death, and would eagerly have done it, had he not feared the consequences would have been fatal to his Kingdom, his friends advised him rather to win her over to his interests by bribes and costly presents, which he did do, and with wonderful profuseness. Herod punctually remitted her the revenues

* Antony had allotted her, in hopes of retaining her favour. Cleopatra's avarice was never to be satisfied, with the most cunning contrivance, the Egyptian Queen was plotting the ruin of Herod, in order to obtain a grant of his whole Kingdom, and by an artful and fraudulent ambush, the Jewish Army was cut to pieces by her General and a select band, Herod himself escaping only with his life.

§ A tremendous earthquake at this time shook Judæa, awful and alarming was the shock, many thousands were in an instant swallowed up and much cattle. It happened in the year of the World, three thousand nine hundred and seventy-three, and Herod had now reigned over Judæa seven years. His Country was at this time engaged in a war with Arabia, and on account of these sad calamities at home, Herod forwarded an Embassy, and sued to the Arabians for peace; the account of the earthquake had been greatly magnified; Arabia rejected his offers, slew all the Ambassadors that brought them, and suddenly marched a formidable Army into Judæa, expecting to have found it destitute and defenceless. Herod's forces were

* Thirty-two Years before Christ.

§ Thirty-one Years before Christ.

terrified

terrified, they were all abandoning him, it was with the greatest difficulty he could give them any courage and rally them.

Herod marched in their front, he led them on the other side Jordan, two very obstinate battles were there fought, Herod was conqueror in both, the Arabians now, in their turn sued for peace, and after Herod had named his own conditions he led his Army back in triumph to Jerusalem.

Cæsar's defeat of Antony at the battle of Actium deprived Herod of a generous and steady friend, and he was very near falling a sacrifice to the resentment of the Conqueror. Upon Mark Antony's overthrow and the destruction of his Army, Herod sent to him immediately, advising him to put Cleopatra to death, and seize on her Kingdom and her Treasures, he would thus be enabled to raise new Forces, make a fresh struggle for the Empire, or at the worst, obtain better overtures for peace. Herod assured him of his best support, offered him his treasures, his whole Army and his strong Holds, places of great safety and almost impregnable, where he might at least withstand, and in time over-power Augustus. Antony's attachment and fondness

§ Thirty Years before Christ.

P 2

for

for that Princess would not admit him to deliberate a moment, a slave to Cleopatra, he refused all the offers of Herod. The Jewish Monarch upon this, turned all his thoughts to his own safety, and making peace himself with Augustus. Before he set out on that expedition, he determined first to get rid of Hyrcan, he was the only surviving male of the Family, in the archives of Rome he had been formally registered and acknowledged King of Judæa, and he had entered into an alliance with the Senate; were Hyrcan dead, Herod thought he might obtain better terms and more success. He well knew his dignities were procured him by Antony, and Alexandra ever watchful over the interests of her Father, and studying how she might revenge herself on Herod, eagerly eyed the present Revolution, and all the advantages it could procure her Family. Herod resolved not to wait on the new Emperor until he had removed this obstacle, and in the eightieth year of his age, he caused the venerable and amiable old man, the Grandfather of his beloved Mariamne, to be beheaded on a publick scaffold, and with the ignominy of a traitor. Immediately after the execution, while reeking with the blood of Hyrcan, Herod set about settling his family, and contrived how he might best secure his Mariamne and Alexandra her Mother, now weeping over their affectionate Parent and
his

his disgrace. Under the care of his High Treasurer and Sohemus one of his Chief Confidents, he sent them to Massada, the strongest Fortress in his Kingdom; in case he should not succeed in his applications to Augustus, he bound Sohemus by a secret and most solemn oath to put both those Princesses to death, after which he directed that his party should raise all the forces they could possibly collect, and erect a standard in defense of his Government.

Herod's domestic plans thus settled, he embarked for Rhodes. Augustus and his Army were at that time there. Herod solicited an audience with the Emperor, superbly arrayed in all his Royalty except his Crown, the King appeared and gracefully paid his homage to Augustus. Herod boldly acknowledged his friendship, and strong Attachment to Antony, his Offers of Assistance to him of Men, Arms, Money, and every necessary for War. He informed the Emperor of the advice he had given him to cause the Egyptian Queen to be put to death, and as a means of obtaining a more advantageous peace to seize on her Kingdom and her treasures, Honour, Friendship, Gratitude to Antony demanded all this, but Antony by rejecting my advice left me at liberty, now, to make a like tender of my services to Augustus, and if you think them
worth

worth your acceptance, and can but forget the past, you shall find me as sincere and steady a friend to you, and the interests of Rome, as I have hitherto been to Antony. The confidence Herod assumed, his open speech and gallant conduct, were all noticed and favourably taken by Augustus, and he told him, he accepted his offers and his friendship, he would confirm to him his Kingdom, and ordered him to put on his Diadem and wear it in his presence, a mark and token of his protection and friendship. Elated with his honours and highly pleased with his success, Herod liberally and profusely made an offer of all his rich presents to Augustus, not forgetting his confidential friends; and Herod now stood higher in the good opinion and friendship of the Emperor, than any of the tributary Princes. Thus gratified, he returned in great joy to Jerusalem, and he drove on to Massada, in haste to meet his beloved Mariamne, and when with love and tenderness he was caressing the Queen and telling her all his glory and successes, she burst into tears and sighs, by a forbidding coldness and disdainful return, she checked all his warmth and ardour of affection; in a moment all was fierceness and resentment, he threatened, he reproached, he terrified, now all tenderness and love, now fury anger and distraction, thus he tortured himself and frightened all around him.

Mariamne's

Mariamne's aversion settled into a deep melancholy. Not very long after Herod's return, Augustus in his way to Egypt passed through Syria, Herod thought it highly necessary to shew his gratitude and respect to the Emperor, and he set out to meet him at Ptolemais; with incredible magnificence he entertained him there and his whole Army, and as they were to pass through a long tract of barren desert, he furnished him and all his Army with bread, wine, and other provisions, Herod accompanied the Emperor as far as Pelusium, and presented him with eight hundred talents. Augustus was charmed both with his politeness, and his generosity, and he was highly pleased with his company.

On the Emperors return from Egypt, Herod again met him with the same hospitality and respect, in recompence for which Augustus now restored him the territories and Revenues of Jericho, Gadara, Hippon and Samaria, and he added to them, two very advantageous Seaports, an enlargement to his Revenues and a valuable Acquisition to his Kingdom. Four thousand Gauls who had been Life Guards, to Cleopatra, the Emperor now presented to the Jewish Favourite. After Herod had taken leave of Augustus, and returned to Jerusalem, the King's distress and wretchedness on account
of

of Mariamne was all renewed, almost a year had now passed over, during which, many tumultuous agitations distracted his private thoughts and all his solitary hours, he saw plainly her disgust, he felt her disdain and contempt, he recollected her bitter and most mortifying Speeches, he well knew how he had disgraced her Grandfathers memory by a publick Execution and secretly murdered her Brother, and more than once laid a plan for the Murder of herself and her Mother—The savage Tyrant, ever on the rack, was always blaming her reproaches and unaffectionate Conduct, and one day, when highly enraged and exasperated, he was on the point of killing her with his own hands, in this moment of Madness and Distraction, Salome (his Sister) corrupted the King's Cupbearer to rush in and make the blackest accusation, hearing an unusual noise, she sent him in to Herod, with a cup in one hand and a purse in the other. Mariamne (he said) had bribed him with the one, to administer to the King the Poison in the other. On this alarming Charge, Herod gave instance Orders for a publick Trial of the Queen. He packed a set of Judges from among his Creatures, and Herod himself carried on the Prosecution. They plainly foresaw he intended the Death of Mariamne, and they wished rather to have
brought

brought about Confinement only and banishment, until the King had more maturely consulted the feelings of his own heart, and weighed the consequences and effect her death might have upon him, but Salome knowing her Brother's aptness to relapse, and how very fluctuating his mind already had been, prevailed on him to sign an order for her Execution. Mariamne received the fatal summons with an heroic courage and resignation, becoming virtuous Innocence, and her exalted Station; with sweet composure and Serenity she moved forwards to the Scaffold, but (O' horrible) at the place of Execution, this amiable Princess encountered a new trial and the most severe of all. Alexandra her Mother expecting a like fate, and by every art and contrivance, cunningly devising how she might prevent it, here met the virtuous suffering Queen, and became the open and insolent accuser of her own Daughter, with the most indiscreet and publick insult, basely loading her with bitter reproaches and even with the odium of guilt and criminality, she tore Mariamne's hair, deranged her dress, and even passionately struck her on the scaffold.

Mariamne suffered all her violence, and bore her pretended resentment without even a change of Countenance, but what was excited by shame and abhorrence of an artifice so

bafe and difingenuous. With the fame firmnefs and conftancy, with which ſhe had lived, Mariamne ſubmitted to die.

Herod was all anguiſh, and the keenefſt remorse, even to Madnefs and Deſpondency ; ſoon as his rage was aſſuaged with the blood of this virtuous, and moſt beautiful Queen, the remembrance of his love returned, and with it the moſt heart-piercing ſorrow and diſtraction. Herod by every Art would fain have got the better of this his poignant Grief for Mariamne. Mariamne was ever uppermoſt, where ever he went the thoughts of Mariamne purſued him, under the horrors of guilt, conſcience more and more wretched, life more and more inſupportable. Herod ſhut himſelf up, he called aloud on Mariamne. He ordered every one he ſaw to fetch his Mariamne ; wine, company, feaſting, none brought him relief, now fierce and frantic with horror, now ſwooning and fainting with deſpair. At this time a grievous Peſtilence broke out in Judæa, and ſwept away Multitudes, a new miſery to Herod, and fatal and deſtructive to his People, it was looked upon as a juſt Judgment from God, for the innocent blood he had ſhed, and moſt of all for the blood of his much revered and highly injured Queen.

Twenty-eight Years before Chriſt.

Herod

Herod chose now to retire to the Deserts to avoid the Plague, and under a pretence of hunting, but in reality it was to shun the sight of Men. He was there seized with a violent and painful distemper in his bowels, and was carried back to Samaria. His constitution did at length get the better of his disease, but his state of mind grew more and more savage, brutish, and wretched. He indulged himself in the basest and most wanton cruelties, he spared neither friend nor foe, every day he sacrificed his Relations and best friends to his passions, humour and insatiable fury.

The most unnatural Mother of the Virtuous Mariamne fell the first Victim to his Rage after her Daughter, for during Herod's late illness at Samaria, in hopes the disease might prove fatal, Alexandra attempted to corrupt the Governors of two Fortresses, Antonia, and Jerusalem, and would fain have persuaded them to yield them both up to her; they were the two main Keys of the Kingdom, the one commanding the City, the other the Temple, and she also endeavoured to get possession of the young Princes, Herod's Children, alledging as a reason, she was only securing the Kingdom for those of his Children by Mariamne. The Governors well knew her Ambition and her intriguing Spirit, and they rather chose to reveal the whole Plot to the King.

Herod passed sentence himself on Alexandra and commanded that she should, without any further trial whatever, immediately be put to death.

The next object of his rage, was Castobares, his Sister Salome's second husband, and Herod some time before had put to death the first.

As he now thought himself securely seated on the Jewish Throne, Herod grew very inattentive in his reverence and respect to the Laws, and shewed a high disregard to their Religion. Some of their Ceremonies he entirely abolished, and many foreign customs he introduced, expressly forbad the Jew.

A Stately and Magnificent Theatre he built in the City, and a spacious Amphitheatre in the suburbs. He instituted publick Games in honour of Augustus, copying the Spectacles, Shows and Magnificence of Rome. He introduced Wrestlers, Players, Gladiators and Musicians, and appointed prizes to Charioteers, Horsemen, and Racers. He got together a number of wild Beasts, fierce and savage, and they fought furiously with Men. The Zealous Jew, saw with horror, the inroads and heathenish Customs he had brought in, and shuddered at the Idea of exposing Men, in sport, to the savage fierceness of the Lion.

The

The Trophies too, with which he had highly ornamented the Theatres resembled Images, and the Jewish Religion prohibited their being erected any where. A General Murmur, and disgust ran through the City. Herod had profaned Jerusalem, and their very Souls abhorred the Idols he set up. Herod assumed a clemency and moderation, he harangued the People himself, would fain have appeased and convinced them, but the heathenish Novelties he had introduced so inflamed all Ranks, they no longer looked upon him as a Jewish King, he was a Heathen and a Tyrant.

In order to stab the King, or some of his Courtiers and Abettors, Ten bold and resolute Jews entered the Theatre, with daggers, which they had carefully concealed. Should they perish in the attempt, one Point they were sure to gain, Herod would be exposed and despised, the Tyrant become odious.

Herod kept always about him very watchful Spies, they intermixed with all Companies, and he, in disguise, often acted as a Spye himself; the Plot was discovered, the Assassins detected were seized with their daggers upon them. Herod put them all to the torture. The People with a spirit of fury and revenge, passionately cut to pieces the body of the Informer, and threw the mangled carcase to the Dogs.

Twenty-five Years before Christ.

The

The savage exhibition on the Scaffold and the Wheel, of these ten bold and resolute Jews, so exasperated their Countrymen, Herod was afraid of a general insurrection and revolt. He set about fortifying Jerusalem, and almost rebuilt Samaria, new naming it Sebaste, and Herod repaired and garrisoned his Strong-Holds and Fortresses.

It was soon after this tumult had subsided, in the thirteenth year of his Reign, a very long Drought afflicted Judæa, occasioning a Famine, and it was followed by a pestilence, almost incredible was the list of the numbers daily dying. As the treasury was quite exhausted by so many expensive buildings, Herod melted down all his plate, an immense quantity, and sent it into Egypt to procure a supply of Provisions and necessaries. The greatest part of their sheep perished, and the People were in danger of wanting wool, for cloathing, long before winter was over. Herod liberally distributed, of his own free bounty, necessaries to every one, he erected Magazines for the grain he had purchased, at seed-time he sowed all their lands, and at harvest sent fifty thousand of his Men to assist the Reapers, by such generosity and prudent management, Herod soon changed the minds of his Subjects, and their hatred into admiration, for his well-timed liberality stored the Country anew, and refreshing rains now succeeding the Drought, they

they set about the labours of the field, cultivated their land, and it soon recovered its fruitfulness and prosperity.

The late Calamity being redressed, and the land invigorated, Herod's rage and love for building again returned, and he caused a stately and most magnificent Palace to be built near the Temple, two spacious and most sumptuous apartments, he named after Augustus and King Agrippa, and another Royal Palace which he now built, he called, Herodion.

One Simon, a Jewish Priest, was reported to have a Daughter, in the opinion of all who saw her, a most astonishing beauty, and it was told to Herod. The King desired he might be introduced to her, and when he beheld her very elegant features, he was instantly charmed with her appearance, and Herod judged it prudent and most for his happiness to marry her. He began therefore by heaping honours on her family, raising them to places of Dignity, and he deposed Jesus the High Priest, on purpose to confer that high Dignity on Simon, upon which, he concluded the Alliance, and with Pomp and great Magnificence, Herod solemnized his Marriage with Mariamne his Daughter.

Twenty-three Years before Christ.

Herod,

Herod once more felt his Ambition highly gratified. He was esteemed and honored by Augustus, and respected either through love or fear by his neighbours and subjects. His two favourite Sons by Mariamne he sent to Rome, they were now grown up, and Augustus undertook himself the care of their Education, and assigned them an apartment in the Palace. The Emperor had lately presented Herod with several new Provinces, and he had given him leave to name which of his Sons he pleased to be his successor. But he had built a vast number of Edifices, and having, after a foreign Style, adorned them with Imagery and sumptuous ornaments, the Jews looked upon them with a jealous Eye, and a secret disgust, they seemed evidently tending to corrupt their Morals and to undermine the purity of their Religion, they expressed their discontent in murmurs and lamentations, and in order now to silence them, Herod remitted one third part of their taxes and annual tribute they had paid him, but that they might be sensible he had noticed their mutiny and cabals, Herod issued out an edict, forbidding all publick and private Assemblies, on account of feasts or any pretence whatever, and the penalty was death. In the midst of every meeting and Society Herod had his spies, and he soon learnt how ineffectual all his precautions

tions were to bring about subjection and obedience, he was therefore for exacting from all and every one of his subjects a strict and solemn Oath of allegiance and fidelity. This edict met with a most violent opposition, Herod was under the necessity of setting it aside, and even wink at their disobedience, lest he should exasperate them by a shew of resentment.

A far happier expedient of pleasing and quieting the people was now under contemplation with Herod, and one which would gratify his ambition by perpetuating his Memory, unconquerable was his vanity and love of Glory always. Herod convened a general Assembly of his People, in a studied Harangue with all the Eloquence he could display, he solemnly professed a zeal for God, for his service and honour.

In return for his many benefits and a grateful acknowledgment of his mercies, he reminded them of the Magnificence and Grandeur of their first Temple, and how vastly inferior, and unlike it, the present. It was God who raised him to the high honours of the Jewish Crown, and he had blessed him with security and peace, great Affluence, and with a Friendship and Alliance with Rome; he felt himself bound by the strong ties of duty, veneration, and gratitude to make a signal avowal of his blessings,

and he hoped, a restoring of their Temple to more of its former Splendour and Magnificence, would meet all their wishes and most hearty concurrence. To remove every suspicion and doubt, Herod assured them, no one stone should be displaced from the present building, until every Material for the new should be completed. He instantly set to work ten thousand Artificers, and he commissioned and engaged a thousand Priests to inspect them, a thousand Carts were employed in fetching and bringing in the various Articles, and such a Multitude of hands were kept in pay, that at the end of the second year, every thing was in readiness, so that they now begun pulling down the old building, and rearing up the New, in about eighteen months the body of the Temple was finished, during which time, Josephus informs us, it never once rained in the day-time, it fell only in the night. The remainder took up several years, but in a little more then eight years, publick Service was performed regularly in the new Temple.

While the building was so expeditiously and prosperously carrying on, Herod made a Voyage to Rome, a respectful Visit to the Emperor and

Sixteen Years before Christ.

affectionately

affectionately to notice his Sons. Augustus congratulated him on his arrival, and received the Jewish Prince with all the Marks of friendship and respect, he entertained him with great splendour, and directed that his two Sons should be immediately given up to their Father. Herod was delighted with their high and elegant accomplishments, their prudent and wise Education, and he gratefully acknowledged the favour in most respectful terms, and with magnificent presents to the Emperor. He made only a short stay, and then set out on his journey back to Judæa, accompanied by the two young Princes; with the loudest acclamations, and general joy, the Father and his Sons were now received at Jerusalem. The dignity, majestic port, and behaviour of the young men, their elegant accomplishments and high education at Rome, their graceful manners were the general talk, and universal topics, exciting a burst of applause. Herod sought out respectable and suitable Connections for them both, he married Alexander to Glaphyra daughter of Archelaus King of Cappadocia, and Aristobulus to Berenice daughter of his Sister Salome.

Agrippa was at this time returned from Italy and settled in Asia, Herod went in person and

Fifteen Years before Christ.

R 2

requested

requested the honour of a visit from him at the Court of Jerusalem, and he offered him his Assistance in an expedition he was undertaking against the Bosphorans; King Agrippa accepted both his invitation and assistance, and after much Glory and signal Success, Herod himself conducted the King into Judæa, led him a circuit, in order to pass through the new Cities he had built, and shew him the magnificent Edifices in Sebaste, Alexandrion and Cesarea; Herod then proceeded on with the King to Jerusalem, and at a short distance from the Metropolis, a concourse of People met them in high Festivity, and walked all the way before them with shouting and Music quite through the City to the Gates of the Palace. Agrippa was received with most superb magnificence, Herod, the very next day, convened a grand Assembly of his Nobles and People, in a graceful speech he laid before them a general plan of his expedition and success with King Agrippa, his respectable and highly honourable Guest, and seeing them still murmuring and petitioning for a redress of grievances, he at that time generously remitted them a fourth part more of all their taxes and yearly tribute. By such liberality, and well-timed policy, Herod kept peace and quietness among the people, but feuds and domestic troubles

Fourteen Years before Christ.

most

most poignantly distressed him at home, and tore all his family to pieces. The two Brothers were exercising every where a haughty Lordliness, a growing Ambition daily and hourly on the increase. To suppress their presumption, Herod brought home and introduced at Court his Son Antipater, who was born to him by Dosithea a former Wife, and had only been privately educated, he now caressed him, raised him to posts of honour, and was daily heaping favours upon him. Alexander and Aristobulus (Sons of Mariamne) saw with envy the honours so partially bestowed by their Father, and when thus exasperated were much freer in their Speeches and insinuations respecting him, these were all secretly whispered to Herod, for while Antipater employed all his Art to cultivate a good understanding with his Father, he took care he should be told of all the Speeches of his Brothers. Herod's distinguishing kindness to Antipater was noticed by his Nobles, the Court, and by all the people, every one looked on him as his Father's successor. King Agrippa was, at this time, setting out for Rome, and Herod obtained leave for his Son Antipater to accompany him. Agrippa himself offered to present the young Prince to the Emperor, and introduce him to the Senate.

Antipater

Antipater set out on his journey and accompanied King Agrippa, but during his absence both by his Agents and his Letters he so exasperated Herod, and raised so many jealousies in his breast against the Brothers, Herod looked upon them both as usurpers, even guilty of treason, and his most dangerous enemies. He resolved to set out himself for Rome, and carry his ambitious Sons Alexander and Aristobulus with him, and arraign their conduct at the tribunal of Augustus. Herod heard, Cæsar was at this time at Aquileia, he went to him there, and before the Emperor accused the two young Princes of high treason, both against his life, and Government. On such an unjust and disgraceful accusation, the young Princes fell into a flood of Tears, with earnest warmth, but with becoming modesty, Alexander pleaded before Augustus his own cause and his brothers, the Emperor and every one present were fully satisfied of their innocence; in a highly graceful manner, Augustus, in open court, reproved Herod for his rashness and too easy credulity, and for the present, the Father was silenced, and seemed reconciled to his Children—The young Princes upon this looked up to the Father for his wonted favour—Herod anticipated their looks and design, and he went up to them, and cordially embra-

Thirteen Years before Christ.

ced

ced, first the one, and then the other, and tears ran down his eyes and theirs, and every one present shed tears on seeing so affecting so very interesting a sight. But Herod was too suspicious in his temper, the young Princes not enough on their guard, and their enemies much too artful and interested, not to give cause for fresh dissention and jealousies; a Speech of Herod's in the Jewish Assembly, soon after his return, wherein he informed them of his business at Aquileia, and the reconciliation brought about by Augustus, added, I do intend my Sons shall reign after me; Antipater first, then Alexander, and lastly, Aristobulus—But, while I live I will reign alone—A speech which excited new discord among the Brothers.

The City of Cefarea was just at this time completed, it had been twelve years in building, and Herod, in high festivity with Royal magnificence and splendour, caused a dedication of it, and in conformity to the customs he had witnessed at Rome, in honour of Augustus, he appointed Games to be celebrated in the Theatres he had purposely erected. Towards the splendour of these lively sports Livia the wife

Ten Years before Christ.

of

of the Emperor contributed five hundred Talents out of her own coffers. To this Festival and Pompous Dedication Herod had invited the Emperor, and selected his Guests from among the first quality, and with most astonishing Grandeur he entertained them. Augustus said, the Soul of Herod was much too great for his Kingdom.

Although the Jewish King was thus distiguishingly honoured with the friendship of the Emperor, and the protection of Rome, and so greatly respected by King Agrippa, Herod disingaged from affairs of state was in himself most miserable, incessantly worried by a constant scene of rancour and domestic strife, and by the hellish Machinations of Salome his Sister, and his Brother Pheroras. His coffers too, were again totally exhausted, to remedy this last evil and provide a present supply of necessaries, Herod adopted a very strange and desperate method. He cast his eyes on the Tombs of David and Solomon, he pretended he had heard very large sums were deposited in them, with the utmost privacy Herod put his designs in execution. At the dead of night, he entered the Sepulchres accompanied by a few confidents, he there found some rich vessels, curiously wrought, and he caused them all to be carried off, he then ventured to search into the coffins themselves, a sudden

sudden chill and miraculous flash instantly struck dead two of his guards, Herod and all his retinue were so scared, he put a stop to all further search. To make some satisfaction and atonement for his late sacrilege, Herod erected a stately Monument of white marble at the entrance into the Royal Sepulchres, and the Jews looked upon it as a Monument of his crime rather than an expiation of it. A spirit of revenge and wanton cruelty was always tormenting the King, and he exercised it on his Sons, and on all who espoused their cause, this occasioned disgust, great dissensions, and the abhorrence of his People. His Sister Salome had worked him up to such a pitch of jealousy and distraction, Herod assumed the rage and fury of a Tyrant, and laid aside the feelings of the Father and the King, his Palace was a slaughter-house, and Jerusalem was covered with blood. One of Salome's deep laid schemes was, to get Alexander told, Herod was so desperately in love with his Wife Glaphyra, the King could not live without her. Alexander instantly requested an Audience with his Father, in the humblest manner, in a flood of tears, he expostulated with him on the impiety of the act, and his sad sufferings for his Wife. Herod

Nine Years before Christ.

VOL. II.

S

astounding

astonished at the accusation, and entirely innocent, sent for Pheroras and wondered how he and Salome could lay so black a perfidy to his charge—Salome denied it all with the boldest assurance, but Herod read her guilt in her countenance, and ordered her, and her Brother, to be banished the Court, after which, Herod commended the prudent moderation and wise procedure of his Son. Alexander had been accused of corrupting two of his favourite Ministers, his high Steward, and his Cupbearer, and he put them both to the torture; in their Agony, they confessed having received presents from the young Prince, but most peremptorily denied his having ever spoken to them, one disrespectful word of the King. Herod ordered them again upon the rack, and pretended to collect enough from their confession to commit his Son to prison, and put him in irons.

Under such treatment Alexander grew desperate, and he transmitted to his Father an accusation against Salome and Pheroras, as the abettors of his troubles, and cause of all his misery and disgrace. With this message and new information, Herod was all on fire, he knew not whom to trust; Racks, Imprisonments and bloody Executions were every where abroad—Fear, Alarm and tumult at home—and within his own breast he felt a
wild-

wildness, sudden starts, and agonies of heart, whenever he slept he was flying from his Sons, they and their Abettors were pursuing him night and day.

During these distracting scenes of horror and despair, Archelaus, King of Cappadocia and Father of Glaphyra, in a lucky moment paid a visit at the Court of Jerusalem. He began by pitying his very miserable Friend, and condemning the baseness and perfidy of his Sons, he expressed his intentions of taking home his Daughter, and leaving Alexander to his Fathers resentment, but Archelaus had the address, under this soothing disguise to explode and reason him out of all these malicious accusations, and extorted confessions, and persuade Herod of his Sons innocence, and he even at last so worked upon him, that he turned intercessor himself for Alexander, by all which means Archelaus settled a family calm, at least for the present. Pheroras his Brother, came to the Palace, affecting great distress, and in the deepest mourning prostrated himself at the feet of Herod, and confessed he only was the Perpetrator and the Villain, and he, it was, who raised all the slanders against his Sons. Upon this confession of his

Eight Years before Christ.

Brothers, Herod set out, accompanied by the two young Princes, for Italy, he was willing himself to explain the whole affair to the Emperor, and he escorted King Archelaus as far as Antioch in his way home to Cappadocia.

Pheroras and Salome ever restless and ambitious, after a time, again raised new jealousies, and told Herod of some fresh plots and assignments concerted against him by his Sons. The King again wrote his troubles to Augustus, and the Emperor seeing Herod resolved on the ruin of his Sons, sent back a commission, empowering Herod to have them tried at Berytus, before the Princes, Nobles, and Governors of Syria, the Emperor laid great stress on King Archelaus, the Father of Glaphyra being one, and further added, that in case the young Princes were by that Court found guilty, the mode of punishment, as well as the degree of it, should be wholly left to the clemency of the Father. Herod obeyed the commands of the Emperor, and he instantly set about the business, and convened the Court, excluding none, except the Cappadocian King, whom he suspected of partiality and favour to his Sons, and Herod (during this time)

A Town belonging to the Sidonians.

young

cautiously placed the young Princes at Platone under a strong Guard.

Before an Assembly of more than five hundred People, Herod himself stood forth their accuser, and with a furious and savage violence brought in his witnesses, dwelt with earnestness and rancour on every argument, by which he could blacken and condemn his Children. Herod's vehemence and brutality was so great, as even to excite astonishment and indignation in the Judges and in the whole Court. Herod concluded his speech with telling them. He was himself a King, and according to the Laws of Judæa, he could himself have punished them; to avoid the imputation of injustice or cruelty, and the feelings of mistrust and suspicion, he rather chose to meet this publick Trial, and obtain the judgement and decision of so August an Assembly. The two young Princes were condemned to die. Herod was to execute the sentence of the Court, when, and how, he thought fit. From Platone they were removed to the City of Sebaste, and there strangled, or as others say, hung on a Gallows. Their bodies were afterwards buried at Alexandrion among the noble and most worthy Ancestors of Mariamne. The unhappy widow of Alexander was sent back to Cappadocia, and Herod returned, with her, the dowry she brought. Glaphyra left two Sons behind her, and Aristobulus Herod's youngest Son left also two more
born

born to him by Berenice the Daughter of his Sister Salome. Herod took them all under his care and patronage, and attended himself to their Education.

Antipater had now no Rival, but his Father and Pheroras his Uncle, both the Son and the Brother laid a deep plot to take off Herod, the better to screen their villainy, Pheroras retired to his Tetrarchy, first taking a solemn oath, never more to return to Court while his Brother Herod lived. Antipater contrived to be sent for to Rome, there to pay his honours to Augustus. Their instruments were in the mean time set to work on this bloody business. Herod at this time fell sick, and he sent for his Brother. Pheroras excused himself, alledging the oath he had taken. Herod's illness proved short, and it was soon after his recovery, he heard his Brother Pheroras was suddenly seized, and in danger of dying, Herod was so far from resenting his late conduct and refusal, he paid him a kind and brotherly visit, uninvited. Pheroras in a few days died, and Herod caused him to be magnificently buried at Jerusalem. After the funeral, two of Pheroras's servants requested an audience with Herod, and they demanded justice against Salome their Mistress (the Sister both of Herod and Pheroras) the two servants accused Salome
of

of having poisoned their Master. Herod's usual method was always to extort truth by the Rack, excess of torture forced from one Woman a confession, that Dosithea, Antipater's Mother, had procured a cup of poison for the King, Salome acknowledged, she knew it to be true, and added, she would go and fetch a part of it which remained but instead of so doing, she flung herself down from a high gallery, her fall did not prove fatal, and on a promise of pardon she told her Brother, that Pheroras stung with grief and remorse at his last unexpected visit, had ordered her to fetch the poison, and destroy it before his face. Thus was Herod convinced of Antipater's perfidy, he saw he was artfully and basely exercising it on his Father, and he had already accomplished it on his two amiable Brothers, Alexander and Aristobulus, the Sons of his beloved Mariamne.

The Queen, Herod's present Wife (of the same name) was accused of being concerned in this last most horrid plot, nothing was absolutely proved against her, but Herod banished her the Kingdom, disinherited her Son Herod, and deposed Simon, her Father, immediately from the High-Priesthood and took from him his dignities. Dosithea also was stripped of all her honours and
costly

costly ornaments, and she too was banished the Court of Jerusalem.

Herod's sad distractions grew more and more insufferable. His conscience most poignantly stung him, he was every moment tortured with its upbraidings, he had murdered the virtuous Mariamne, and her two graceful, highly accomplished Sons; his Crown was now in danger and even his life from Antipater; Rivers of innocent blood had flooded his whole Reign; his declining years, and old age, were all tormented and embittered by the hellish intrigues of Salome his Sister; his Person dreaded and hated; his Family abhorred by all the Nation; and last of all his Crown, and all his glories on the eve of being eclipsed, by the birth of a Miraculous Child, by Heaven and Earth proclaimed, the promised the long expected Messiah and Saviour of a World. Such were the national Feuds, the animosities and expectations of the People, and such the distracted state of Herod, when the Angel Gabriel, who had been employed to manifest to the Prophet Daniel, the precise time of the coming of the Messiah, by a determinate number of weeks, was now sent on a Commission to Zachary, a Priest of strict piety, and of the course of Abiah, while he was in the midst of his duty

offering

offering up incense in the Temple. Gabriel here informed him of the birth of a Son, whom Elizabeth his wife should shortly bear him. That Son should have the distinguished honour of being the Fore-runner and Harbinger of the great Messiah, Saviour of a World. Surprised at what he saw and more by what he heard, and feeling so conscious of his own and Elizabeth's extreme old Age, Zacharias respectfully asked a token to confirm his belief of the interesting message he had brought, and Gabriel's grant of his request, while it afforded him a confirmation, it severely reprov'd his distrust. From that moment Zachary was struck dumb, and continued so, until the birth of his promised Son. It was six months after, when the Angel was again sent on a message to Nazareth, to a virgin named Mary, she was at that time under the guardianship of Joseph, to whom she had been betrothed, they were both of them of the house and Lineage of David. The glad tidings the Angel imparted were, that by the favour of God, she was by him made choice of, to be the highly honoured and happy Mother of the Messiah, that Saviour of the World now expected to be born; Gabriel directed her to name the child Jesus; Mary in great astonishment was doubting and wondering how these things could be, and the Angel kindly condescended to relieve her perplexity, by revealing

to her the miraculous Conception of this Divine Child, with humble confidence, Mary gratefully submitted to the will of Heaven; before the Angel left her, in order to comfort Mary, he informed her of the pregnancy of her cousin Elizabeth, and she very soon after, set out on a journey to the hilly country, to congratulate her and her husband upon it, after a visit of three months, Mary returned home to Nazareth. Elizabeth was safely delivered of her promised Son and she named him John; Zacharias testified his consent in writing, immediately upon which, his tongue was loosed and he joyfully sung praises to God.

Joseph had been apprized by an Angel of the conception of Mary his betrothed wife, and was expressly directed to take her, and her Child, under his patronage and protection, moreover the Child about to be born was appointed by God to be the long looked for Messiah the Saviour of the world. Joseph readily obeyed and took her to his own home. A decree of the Emperor, at this time reached Judæa, commanding an estimate to be made of all Estates, and a Register of all persons in that Kingdom, this decree obliged Joseph and the espoused Virgin to repair to Bethlehem, the City of David, now Bethlehem was the City foretold by the Prophets

phets as the birth-place of the Messiah, On this occasion a great concourse of people had resorted thither to be registered, Joseph and Mary were therefore put to two inconveniences, their stay was much longer, and they could obtain no lodging or accomodation; as the time for her delivery was now come, she was forced to take up her habitation in a stable; Mary there brought forth her Godlike Son, and wrapped him in swadling Cloaths and laid him in a Manger. The News was first announced to the Shepherds as they were watching their flocks, an Angel revealed it to them, and a multitude of the Heavenly Host were seen accompanying him.

To the stable of the humble cot, some distinguished characters, the wise Men from the east were conducted into Judæa, to make their congratulations and first offerings to the Saviour; according to the Mosaic law the child was circumcised on the eighth day, and as the Angel Gabriel directed, they named him Jesus.

Just at this juncture all Jerusalem was in an up-roar, for these Magi or wise Men from the east came in a body to the Metropolis, under the guidance of a miraculous new Star, which moved on majestically before them, directing them as it were to the place and person they were in search of. As these travellers looked

upon him as King of the Jews, they came first to Jerusalem, where he was most likely to be born or heard of—their arrival, and the reasons they assigned, filled the whole City with consternation—The Sanhedrim or Grand Council were instantly summoned, and consulted as to the place of his birth, and they all named Bethlehem. Herod who dreamt of nothing but earthly grandeur and an earthly Kingdom, even now looked on this Infant as a Rival, and resolved from that moment to destroy it. He sent a message to the Magi, and requested to see them at the Palace, he was very inquisitive about their errand, sifted them every one, and of every circumstance about the Star, studying how he might best accomplish his bloody purpose, and then, he artfully dismissed them, go (says he) and search diligently for the young Child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I may go likewise and pay my homage to him.

As the wise men passed out of the City Gates, they were greatly rejoiced to see the same Star appear and moving on before them; it fixed itself over the house where the young Child lay, and perpendicularly shot down its rays upon it. Here with devout reverence they approached the young Babe, and knelt down before it, they opened the treasures they had brought, and made an offering to him of gold, frankincense and

and myrrh; after this they were ordered to return home another way without passing near Jerusalem. At the end of forty days, according to the Jewish custom, he was brought to the Temple at Jerusalem, and presented to the Lord with the offering usual on these occasions. It was here Simeon, a very amiable and venerable Priest, of consummate piety, and endowed with a spirit of Prophecy met them; Simeon had an intimation from God that he should not see death, until he had seen with his eyes the Lord of life, the promised Messiah; he held up the Babe in his arms, and in language strikingly prophetic, Simeon revealed to his Mother the many sorrows, blasphemies, and persecutions, this divine innocent was destined to endure; Sufferings, in which indeed she would herself partake, and then in a sort of extacy, he piously sung his own requiem—

“ Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in
“ peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation”—
after which, he restored the Babe to his Mother.

A devout and venerable Prophetess named Anna, coming at that instant to the Temple, with piety and holy ardour, proclaimed the glad Tidings and confirmed the truth to all the faithful Israelites.

Herod

Herod had been sorely disappointed at hearing the wise men from the East had returned home another way, and the year following he issued out an edict commanding all and every male infant to be massacred, not only in Bethlehem, but throughout all the Towns, Villages, and Coasts round about, all from two years old and under.

An author of the fifth Century relates, that at this very time, in the Town of Bethlehem, Herod had a little boy at nurse, and that among the rest, his own little innocent was massacred. Augustus is said on this occasion to have passed a severe reflection on him, but it applied very literally also to Antipater and his Sons by Mariamne.

“ I had rather be Herod’s hog, than his
“ Son.

The Providence of God had so ordered it, that the Mother had conveyed the young Child far out of the reach of these bloody executioners.

Antipater having some mistrust respecting the former poison he had procured, forwarded now a fresh supply to his Mother, by a confidential servant named Batillus, least the old one should in any way have miscarried. Batillus immediately on his arrival at Jerusalem was apprehended, Herod having unravelled his whole
plot,

plot, caused him to be put to the torture, and he here made a full confession of his whole errand from Rome. Having extorted this confirmation, Herod wrote a letter to his Son, and slightly complained to him of some ill treatment he had received from his Mother, he intreated him to make what haste he could home, lest a long absence should give a handle to his enemies, and affect his interests in the Succession; Herod with seeming affection concluded with assuring his Son he freely forgave all past miscarriages, and would on his arrival shew him every mark of paternal love, satisfaction and joy.

Antipater's hopes at this time were, his Father had taken the poison, and was laid in his grave. He instantly prepared for his journey and set out for Jerusalem, and it was much about the time of the massacre at Bethlehem; at Tarentum a dispatch met him, and it brought the news of the death of his Uncle Pheroras; Antipater was greatly alarmed, and compared what he now heard, with the accounts of his Mother's disgrace. He had no love whatever for his Uncle, but he sadly feared he might have missed his aim of poisoning the King. He pursued his journey as far as Sicily, and stopt at Celenderis. here he called a council of his companions and friends

friends, named his fears, talked over his Uncles death, and his Mother's banishment, he grew jealous and suspicious, thought it was a sad Omen, and enquired if he should proceed homewards or return back to Rome. His friends told him nothing would so surely dispel his fathers suspicions as his presence and return to Court, and over persuaded him to get on board again, after which a fair wind soon landed him at Sebaste; instead of meeting here the shouts and acclamations he fully expected, the People were murmuring and loading him all the way he went with the bitterest reproaches, imputing to him the bloody execution and sufferings of both his Brothers.

Antipater hastened from hence directly to Jerusalem, Herod had so closely concealed his designs that the Prince drove on to the Palace, the gates were instantly flung open to him, but all his retinue were refused admittance; as soon as Antipater was ushered in to the presence of the King, he threw himself at his feet and offered to embrace his knees, he here met a stern repulse, and was arrested on the spot, Antipater asked the reason, and was only upbraided as being the cause of the death of his two brothers, and that he should be formally arraigned and tried before Quintilius Varus the Governor

Governor of Syria, now on a visit at the Court of Herod; at this solemn and highly awful trial of his rebellious and unnatural Son, the Father had prevailed upon Varus to sit as Judge, and as all things were in readiness, the very next day the court sat, and Antipater's trial commenced. An August and numerous assembly had been purposely convened, and the young Prince was brought into Court before them; Antipater fell on his knees, petitioning to be heard, at least before sentence should be passed against him. Herod commanded him to stand up, that he might the better level his Resentments at him. He began by informing the court of his designs to poison him, and unravelled the conspiracy he had discovered and extorted from Barillus, proving the truth, as he went on, by witnesses, the clearest and most authentic evidence, after which, he named, and with a vehemence expressive of what he felt, Antipater's detestable conduct and treachery to his brothers, then fixing his eyes on his Son he added, if they were guilty Thou hast been their unnatural follower—if they were innocent, their cruel and bloody Murderer. Herod's exertion and excess of grief occasioned now a flood of tears, he could go on no longer, and he beckoned to his chief counsellor, Damascen, ordering him to go on with the accusation, and bring in his proofs. Da-

mascen was prevented by the young Prince, who now requested leave to speak for himself; he argued how improbable it was, for one in his situation, to commit a crime so horrible, a parricide so monstrous, and especially as he had still before his eyes, the dreadful punishment his two Brothers had suffered for a like offence. He went on accusing of falsehood, and of the basest corruption all the witnesses, but here Damascen interrupted him, and gave such satisfactory evidence of their veracity, as left the Court no room to doubt of Antipater's guilt. The Judge now informed the Prince, the Court were waiting his reply, and Herod and himself desirous, that he should bring in, whatever proofs of innocence he had to offer. Antipater could only have recourse to oaths and imprecations, the refuge of the blackest criminals, and he began calling down the heaviest curses on himself, in case he were guilty. To such impiety and declamation Varus instantly put a stop, by ordering into Court the poison sworn to by the witness, and having caused a condemned criminal to be led into the midst of the Assembly, a part only of the poison was given him. The wretch fell down dead almost as soon as he had drank it. The Judge arose from the bench, broke up the Court, and gave his opinion only to Herod. The young Prince was remanded back to Prison, and Herod forwarded

forwarded to Rome the account of the whole trial, charging the messenger, who had been present throughout, to give the Emperor every further particular he might require.

Whilst these sad tidings were forwarding to Rome, a most miserable and dreadful disease seized Herod, an ulceration of his bowels with excruciating pains, his body and limbs were covered with running sores, and in some places vermin and worms, offensively loathsome, eat away his flesh. He was besides this worn out with age, sickness, and infirmities, a torment to himself and to every one around him. Herod seemed very desirous to make his will, and to appoint his youngest Son, his heir and successor, he had two other Sons, Archelaus and Phillip, but so much had been said against them, they were now both out of favour.

Herod bequeathed a thousand talents to Augustus, and five hundred more to Livia the Empress. A very large Legacy to his unworthy Sister, the rest and residue of his estates and revenues, he ordered to be divided among his children. Notwithstanding his sufferings, Herod, was roused from his languor and despair, by a tumult and insurrection in the City, he set about quelling it with wonderful agility, the Ring-leader be burnt alive,

alive, and some of his confederates. The King's disease grew every day more and more loathsome and inveterate, what seemed most to mortify him was, his foreseeing the Nation would feel no sorrow for his death, inhuman, savage and desperate, he bethought himself however of the most horrid of all expedients to prevent their rejoicing. On account of the late riots, Herod had caused himself to be carried in a litter to Jericho, and here he issued out a summons, commanding the Elders and Heads of all the Jews to repair thither under penalty of death. On their arrival Herod shut them all up in a magnificent Amphitheatre, and sent for his Sister Salome and Alexas her husband, giving them a strict and secret charge to have them butchered, as soon as his breath was gone, by which means added he, I shall damp the Peoples Joy, and secure a real mourning at my death.

At this time the messengers returned from Rome. The Emperor confirmed the sentence, and signed the dead warrant for Antipater's execution. Herod's misery and tortures, more and more exquisite, occasioned after the bitter cries of a most painful attack, a report that he was dead, it reached the prison where his Son was confined, Antipater was overjoyed, and he sent for the goaler and consulted him on the happy event, the
goaler

goaler acquainted the King, and threw him into a most violent rage, Herod instantly dispatched his body guard and put his Son to death; the Father outlived him only five days, during these, he made his will afresh; Herod left his Kingdom to his Son Archelaus, made Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee, and bequeathed to his Son Philip the Regions of Trachonitis, Gaulon, Batanea, and Panias, and he now constituted them into a Tetrarchy. A legacy both in money and land he left to Salome. Herod died in the seventieth year of his Age, and he had reigned thirty-seven.

In spite of all the oaths they had taken and the protestations they had made, Salome and Alexas, were so far from executing the last bloody and tyrannical orders of their Brother, that they assiduously strove to hide the secret from the nation, they repaired immediately to the Hippodrome, the spacious Amphitheatre where the Jews were shut up, and caused the gates to be all flung open, and directed them, as by order of the King, to return home, they accordingly set out on their journey to Jerusalem, after which they published the news of Herod's death, and summoned to the Hippodrome all the General Officers and Soldiery, and read them a letter from the deceased King, in which he thanked
them

them, for their past services and fidelity to him, and he wished them now to shew it to his Son Archelaus, whom he had appointed his Successor. Ptolemy, Lord-keeper of the royal Seal, now read to them the will. All the People shouted, Long Live King Archelaus. Both Officers and Soldiers paid him homage, and assured him of their allegiance and attachment.

A most magnificent funeral was now sumptuously prepared for Herod by his Son, his body was placed in a gorgeous litter all of gold, and enriched with precious stones, the royal crown on his head, and a golden sceptre in his hand, his Sons, Grandsons, Salome his Sister and Alexas her Husband, with all the rest of his Relations marched by the side, and his General Officers, Civil and Military followed according to their ranks; his Guards led the Van, fully accoutred and in order of battle; five hundred of the King's domestics closed the procession with spices and aromatic perfumes, thus in solemn pomp they moved slowly on to the Castle of Herodion, where according to his last express orders, they deposited the remains of this bloody, cruel, and abandoned Tyrant.

After the death of Herod, the Kingdom was divided into four parts. Each division was
called

called a Tetrarchy, and governed by a Prince, who bore the name of Tetrarch.

The Life of HEROD exhibits a strange Mixture of Wretchedness and Vanity—A Scene perpetually Shifting—A Soul ever on the Rack—Bold, Enterprizing, Resolute—A Man of great Address—Popular in his Behaviour—Generous and Prince-like in his Expences and Entertainments, whose ruling Passion was Ambition—He was jealous of Power—Designing—Ever on the Watch—Suspicious of all the World—Inexorably Cruel and Rapacious—A Slave to Passion, he knew no Law but Will—Of Implacable Resentment—Uninfluenced by Reason—Irreconcilable to Penitence—Without Religion and without Humanity.

END OF THE JEWISH
HISTORY.

ESSAY

E S S A Y XX.

O N T H E B O O K O F

J O B.

THE most ancient account we have of this venerable Patriarch, this model of patience still held up for our example, is, that he lived on the confines of Idumea and Arabia, he married an Arabian Princess, his eldest Son was named Ennon, and the History informs us, he had afterwards six other Sons, and three Daughters.

Job was the Son of Zarah, and the fifth in descent from Jacob, in the line of Esau, he reigned in Idumea, and his Palace was in the City of Denaba. The royal friends who visited

VOL. II. X him

him in his abasement and afflictions, were Eliphaz King of Teman, Bildad and Zophar two other neighbouring Kings, and Elihu (the meaning of this name is, " my God is he.") Elihu was Son of Barachel, a wise and good man, modest, amiable, and respectful.

Job is supposed to have been a cotemporary with Moses, and some authors have thought, that Moses himself, while he lived in Midian, wrote the Book of Job, antecedent to his Government over Israel, and his songs and triumphal odes, especially that in commemoration of the miracle wrought in favour of the Israelites, and to the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptian Host, is an elegant and pleasing proof of his poetic genius and abilities, but if Moses was the Author, the four last verses must have been added by some inspired person in order to complete the History.

The Book was written in Hebrew, and in verse, the style is lofty and sublime, abounding with Imagery, and a variety of interesting, highly awful events, and characters. It describes Job, as a powerful and magnificent Prince, honourable, royal, abounding in possessions, he was the greatest of all the East, and most reasonably expecting a long enjoyment of his honours, for
the

the hand of providence which had so liberally bestowed, up held him, and led him forwards, engaged, as it were, in the preservation, and continuance of his blessings. " God had set a
 " hedge about him, and about all that he had,
 " on every side, and his substance increased
 " daily.

He was blessed with a numerous offspring of Sons and Daughters, enjoying his affluence, inheritors of his happiness, and to an affectionate Parent, that is surely a long and lengthened out enjoyment, as he was to live, over and over again, in his posterity.

Job was a virtuous Prince in the high relish of all his blessings, diffusing their beneficial influence all around him- " A perfect and upright
 " Man, one that feared God, and eschewed
 " evil."

It was in the height and sunshine of prosperity, amidst the innocent gaiety and enchanting sweetness of domestic life, and while he was possessing the highest national honours, that in one instant, (events and causes equally unforeseen) all was changed into sorrow, and utter despair. The fortunes of this good man were blasted, lightening from Heaven struck dead all his flocks and herds, his numerous offspring, those most en-

dearing pledges of his future happiness, were all snatched from him at a blow, “ for his children “ were met together in their elder Brother’s “ house, a meeting of love and joy, a family “ feast, when a Hurricane smote the four corners “ of the house, and it fell, and buried them all in its ruins.

The news of these sad disasters is quickly brought to the Palace, one Messenger on the heels of another. The loss of all his riches, his Oxen, and Camels, and Asses, and Sheep, the affectionate Patriarch bore with wonderful calmness and silent resignation, but he was so fond of his children, so jealous and fearful was he of their offending God, that at every feast and family visit, Job rose up early, and offered a sin-offering and a peace-offering for each of his Sons, lest (says he) amidst his gait and mirth he may have blasphemed his God, and when he heard of his dear childrens calamity, his seven Sons and his three Daughters all in riper years and the fullest enjoyment, Job rose from his seat, walked to and fro, he rent his garments, he shaved his head, fell prostrate on the ground before God, and breathed out a pious Soliloquy on the day of his birth, and the hour of his death, pointing out a likeness which no intervening events, prosperous or adverse, could ever

ever alter or destroy. Job found himself soon beset with a new and excruciating misery, a painful disease of body was added to the sorrows and distraction of his mind, and just at a time when he in patience was collecting all his strength and fortitude to assuage them. Sore and angry boils resembling the small pox, offensively loathsome, covered him all over. Job sat in sackcloth and ashes, suffering from unjust calumniation, and accumulated misery, which was only counterbalanced by conscious innocence and reliance on God. The History concludes with a highly pleasing, and enchanting restoration to ease, dignity, honour, wealth and happiness, the reward of his virtues and his trials, the Approbation of his God.

The poem is lively, and animated, wrought up with all the beauty and sublimity of figure, the luxuriance of description, serious yet pleasing, awful, pathetic, and instructive, full of God, his perfections, and providence, under misery so humiliating closely adhering to God, and in the never-ceasing exercise of patient submission, fortitude and resignation. It is surely a very beautiful specimen of Primitive Theology, and of Gentile piety.

A subject so pathetic, is wonderfully suited to the exalted, strong, and animated expressions of
the

the East, and one might challenge the most celebrated Authors of antiquity, even there, to produce a specimen of eloquence so noble and thoroughly affecting.

The Apostle St. James, divides the book of Job into " the Patience of Job; and the Catastrophe or Event." A divine tragi-comedy, the sorrow and bitter anguish, sweetly ending, in enlarged prosperity, and more complete enjoyment. Armed with Wisdom, Righteousness, and Patience, this good man seems to stand impregnable; he was learned in all the arts and philosophy of the schools, in astronomy and the constellations, and we are told, writing, some traces of navigation, the secrets and beauties of nature, and much sublime and useful knowledge was then, and there acquired, and cultivated. His divine fortitude, his sincerity, piety, and humble deportment most amiably exhibit his Righteousness.

Although the charges of his friends were heavy, they were all of them false; he sensibly felt them, but integrity and conscience were both on his side, a counter-evidence to their accusations; his spirit was thus kept alive, his serenity returns, his mind strengthen's, possessing himself, he triumphs in his uprightness.

His Patience, so severely tried, appears the more honourable and exemplary, after his having enjoyed

enjoyed so dignified a station, such affluence and respectability. He was stripped quite naked, not one of all his many Comforts left him to enjoy; afflicted by God, by Men, and by Devils; by friends, and by foes despised, slandered, calumniated; shamefully and passionately ordered by his Wife, to curse his God and die.

The Subject of contest and dispute between Job, and the three neighbouring Princes, who came to visit him, seems to be, whether God distributes rewards and punishments in exact proportion to the Merit, or Demerit, of each individual, his pretended friends assert He does, and therefore the uncommon severity of the Calamities, notwithstanding his apparent righteousness, prove Job in reality a grievous Sinner. They highly aggravate his supposed Guilt, by the imputation of Hypocrisy, and call upon him to confess it, and acknowledge the justice of his punishment. Job never once presumes to accuse the Supreme Being of injustice, yet asserts his own innocence and uprightness, in the most humble and pathetic language.

Elihu, another Friend, attempted to arbitrate the matter, by alledging the impossibility that so frail and ignorant a creature as Man, should comprehend the ways of the Almighty,
and

and therefore condemns the unjust and cruel inference, the three royal friends had drawn from the sufferings of Job. Elihu, after this, blames Job for his Presumption, his acquitting himself of all Iniquity, since the best of Men are not pure in the sight of God, but all have something to repent of, and Elihu advises Job to make this use of his afflictions. At last, by a bold and most sublime figure of Poetry, the Supreme Being is himself introduced, speaking from the Whirlwind, and silencing them all, by the most amazing display of his Power, Magnificence and Wisdom, and the comparative littleness, and ignorance of Man. Life and Immortality were not as yet brought to light by the Gospel, and a future retribution, that most satisfactory of all solutions, remained yet to be disclosed.

The fourteenth Chapter, is a very awful, eloquent, and pathetic representation of mortality. "Man that is born of a Woman, has but a few days to live, and is full of trouble; he springeth up as a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

The twenty-ninth, a sweet enchanting picture of domestic life, united with Royal Dignity in all its highest honours. Besides being a Prince
Job

Job sat as Judge among his People. " From my youth, compassion was brought up with me as a Father. I put on righteousness and it cloathed me." My judgment was as a Robe and a Diadem. I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him, that was ready to perish, came upon me, and I caused the Widows heart to leap for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a Father to the poor. I break the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

After this you read the highly finished portrait of the War-horse.

The Generous Beast will arrest your fancy, and fire your imagination. Leaving unnoticed, figure, lineaments, and motion, the ornaments of lesser Poets, with wonderful spirit and vivacity he animates his description with the beauties of the Horses mind. Imagine two Armies on the point of engaging, colours flying, the first signal given by blowing up the trumpets, ever after the Horse is on a foam; the delay of the second trumpet is of high importance to his figure, pawing and striking his hoof all fury and impatience for the battle.

God is himself the Speaker.

“ Hast thou cloathed his Neck with Thunder,
“ the Glory of his Nostrils is terrible. He
“ paweth in the Valley, rejoicing in his strength.
“ He goeth out to meet the armed men, mocking
“ at fear. The quiver rattleth against him, the
“ glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth
“ up the ground with fierceness. He careth
“ not for the sound of the trumpet, smelling the
“ battle afar off, the Thunder of the Captains
“ and the shouting.”

But the grand amazing display of Power, Majesty, and Sublimity throughout the thirty-eighth Chapter to the last, where every line delineates the God, every sentence opens with some new grand object in creation, no pen can describe, no tongue express, no thoughts conceive, and no eye read without abasement and annihilation, and yet, after Job has thus awfully impressed on your mind the sublime attributes, and infinite Majesty of Almighty God, as exemplified in the astonishing wonders of Creation, he finds a means of aggrandizing, and raising your conceptions higher still, and by how simple a mode?

“ Lo, these are a part of His ways;
“ how very little a portion is heard of HIM.”

In

In like manner, Milton in the execution of that glorious commission, given the Messiah to extirpate the Host of Rebel Angels.

“ Go, thou Mightiest, in thy Father’s Might,”
then cloathing him with Terror and Majesty, even more than he could describe, finds a way to make you conceive of him far more Mighty and terrific still.

“ Yet half his strength he put not forth, but
“ checked
“ His Thunder in mid volley.”—

The History now pleasingly informs you, Job is restored to health, dignity, riches and enjoyment, and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before, and the Lord blessed his latter end, more than his beginning. He had fourteen thousand Sheep, six thousand Camels, and a thousand yoke of Oxen, and a thousand she Asses.

Job had also seven Sons and three Daughters, and no Women were found so fair as the Daughters of Job.

He lived after this, an hundred and forty years, and saw his Sons, and his Sons Sons, even four Generations.

Job was then gathered to his Fathers, old, and full of days, riches, and honour.

E S S A Y XXI.

O N T H E B O O K O F

P S A L M S.

TH E S E compositions were made at different seasons, and on many and various occasions by David, Solomon and Hezekiah, Kings of Israel and Judah, and by Asaph, Moses and others.

Ezra, a very learned Jew, of the house of Aaron, (who by the interest of Queen Esther had been deputed as Viceroy from the Court of Persia) first made a collection of them at Jerusalem.

Ezra

Ezra presided over the Jewish Church and Nation thirteen years, and was then succeeded by Nehemiah. On the arrival of this new Governor, Ezra, with dignity and graceful condescension, applied himself wholly to the services of the Temple; he sat as President in the grand Sanhedrim, and there, as one of his employments, Ezra revised, and accommodated to the services of the day, this Book of Psalms. The Jews were great lovers of musick, and attributed much influence to its charms, it calmed the passions and excited devotion.

Divine songs, and Hymns of praise and thanksgiving (one part of the chorus answering to another as you now see in the choirs of Cathedrals) formed a very principal part of the Jewish Worship, and the Psalms were referred to, in the order in which they are now placed, by our Saviour himself and his Apostles.

Jewish hymns were always and justly admired for their grandeur, strength and loftiness of expression, and the elegance and beauty of their imagery. Moses was eminently distinguished as a Poet as well as a Legislator, the bursts of eloquence, the flights of fancy and poetic sweetness delight you, the spirit of true piety and warmth of devotion never breathed more fervently than in these Divine Compositions.

The

The rich vein of Poetry must have greatly suffered by a prose translation. How highly captivating and beautiful must they have been in the original?

Meditations so sublime are beyond all commendation; Devotion so devout surpasses all expression; yet in Hebrew, and in elegant verse, sung aloud unto God in the spacious Temple, with the blast of trumpets, and the men singers and the women singers, with the timbrel and the harp, in Jewish pomp, on a solemn festival and general thanksgiving, we might conceive still higher of their loftiness and Majesty, catch more of the flame of devotion and be lost in extasy. Even now to read them after so many of their beauties are obscured, Compositions so animated and sublime, draw us off from converse with men to devout communion with our God.

A select portion were daily sung as morning and evening exercises in the Temple, one was always chaunted at the first opening of the doors, and another at shutting them up at night, others while the Sacrifices were offering up. Sometimes the King bore a part alone, speaking in his own person, the responses made by the Priests and Levites, and all the People joined in chorus. They are wisely suited to private devotion, as
well

well as publick worship, to solemn fasts and days of humiliation, to feasts, weddings and conviviality, Anthems of commemoration, thanksgiving and joy, as well as solemn Dirges and Funeral odes.

Some were composed in times of trouble and scenes of distress, under Saul's persecutions, Absalom's rebellion, and in captivity and bondage, some songs of Triumph, after signal deliverances and sung on solemn feast days, many are penitential, ingenuous confessions and deep contrition, and it is pathetically and justly remarked, that no present pleasure and gratification, could ever counterbalance the misery, distraction and sufferings, the Royal Penitent so exquisitely describes in some of them. How desirable to escape the heart-piercing sorrow of such Repentance, by avoiding Sin, which costs such bitter anguish and contrition.

These sublime hymns breath throughout so divine an eloquence, you grow devout on reading them, and the Jews gave out, that whosoever would make the trial, and repeat them over three times every day, would surely be inhabitants of the Heavenly Canaan. Thus they reduce righteousness to practice, for while we acquire the sentiments, we perform the offices of devotion.

tion. Our Saviour used them as such on the cross, breathing out his spirit with the words of David. No tongue of Man or Angel can convey a higher idea of any composition, or of their felicity who rightly use it.

Many of the Psalms are Prophecies, and referred to, as such, by our Saviour and his Apostles. To bear testimony to him and his divine mission, is indeed one great and ultimate design of all the sacred writers.

Not only the predictions themselves but even the accomplishment of many is here related. The sufferings of our Saviour are all of them minutely described, and the manner of his death on the cross, with every attendant circumstance of mockery and horror, even to the parting of his garments and to the casting lots for his vesture. The Royal Psalmist most obviously delineates Man's redemption, the incarnation, the passion, the resurrection and the ascension of the Son of God, as if he were an eye-witness, asserting what he now saw upon the spot, rather than, as a Prophet, naming events a thousand years before their accomplishment.

The repetitions resemble a form of prayer on extraordinary occasions; the works of creation
and

and providence, but more especially the goodness and mercy of God, are a frequent theme of praise, devotion, and gratitude.

The Book contains one hundred and fifty Hymns or Psalms, and is divided into five parts or books. The first finishes with the forty-first Psalm, and concludes with Amen and Amen. The second Book at the seventy-second, with the same, only adding the prayers of David, the Son of Jesse, are ended. The third Book ends at the eighty-ninth, and the fourth at the hundred and sixth. The fifth includes the remainder. Amen Amen concludes the first three. A single Amen the fourth, and the last finishes with Hallelujah. Praise ye the Lord. The Hebrew word is expressive of great joy and holy rapture.

I. The first Psalm is a Preface to the whole Book. A powerful persuasive to the serious study of it.

The happiness of Man, what it is—wherein it consisteth? The kindest and wisest advice (a beautiful climax) directing you not to go into the company of the ungodly—not to stay in it—not to habituate yourself to sit in it—never to sit at ease, in it.

II. The second is a high compliment, and elegant ode, on the settlement of the Crown upon David and his Family. This was chosen for his grand Coronation Anthem. Verse the eighth a Prophecy of the incarnation of Our Saviour, as St. Paul informs us, and the Apostles declare God by the mouth of his servant David, uttered these things concerning Christ. *

III. This Psalm was composed at the time of David's flight from his Son Absalom, and describes the safety he experienced under God's protection. The seventh verse exhibits a striking image taken from beasts of prey. "Thou smitest their cheek bone (where their strength lay) thou breakest the teeth of the ungodly." God thus takes away, the power, and means of hurting.

IV. An inquiry after happiness, a hymn full of assurance and piety. The displeasure of God includes in it infamy and distress, but his favour every thing great, good, and honourable.

V. David's record and pious acknowledgment, that God is King over Israel. A devout address to God under trouble and persecution.

* Acts 13. 33.

VI. Pious meditations during sickness, and on recovery.

VII. Upon the slander of his bitter enemy Cush the Benjamite. By a beautiful figure David describes him already in his sufferings, involved in the very calamity, he had been preparing for another.

VIII. A Moon light Hymn, composed soon after David's victory over Goliath of Gath. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength, (comparing Goliath with himself, a mere child,) that thou mightest still the Enemy, and this mighty Avenger. It alludes also to the victory gained by Christianity over its Enemies, and thus Our Saviour applies it to himself and his Apostles, the latter though ignorant and illiterate, void of power or interest, triumphed over the wisdom of the wise, and silenced the cavils of the subtle Pharisee.

IX. X. Supposed to be two parts of one Hymn. David had been delivered out of some great distress. Lively and pathetic reflections on the oppression and insolence of Saul's Ministers. Impatient at seeing the Good involved in misery, they called in question the very Being and Pro-

* Matthew xxi. xvi.

vidence of God; David assures them, notwithstanding these seeming confusions, there was a God in Heaven still, a righteous God, who for secret causes, and for a while, might suffer the wicked to triumph, yet sooner or later, he would be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in time of trouble.

XI. In order to avoid the persecution of Saul, David had fled to the Mountains, the Strong Holds and the Rocks, in this Psalm he holds a dialogue with his friends, and it was rehearsed in the Tabernacle before the congregation upon certain occasions.

XII. XIII. Supplications to God in great distress. David here asserts, that in the Jewish Economy, wickedness was seldom indulged with prosperity, should it appear so, it was but for a short time, the flattering prospect soon vanished, Delinquents were almost always punished.

XIV. A Psalm composed in his flight from Jerusalem, lamenting the defection of his People to Absalom, "when the Lord bringeth us back to Jerusalem (from whence we are expelled) Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad."

XV. After

XV. After the rebellion was quelled and David had returned to Jerufalem, he gives this character and description of a citizen of Sion. His religion the habitual praftise of holinefs. An exaltation of moral virtues and intended for the ufe of the Priests.

XVI. The Golden Pfalm, strongly expreffing his confidence in God, while he was under per- fecutions. David implores the protection of God from this confideration, that he ftedfaftly adheres to God's law himfelf, and is ready to give his aid and fupport to all who do. St. Peter declares it a Prophefy of the death, refurrection, and afcenfion of Chrift:

XVII: A devout prayer of David's, a folemn avowal of his innocence, in oppofition to the Courtiers of Saul, a confidential, hopeful and pathetic appeal to God:

XVIII: A Song of Triumph: David in the loftieft ftile, describes the Majefty of God, and the awful manner by which he extricates him out of his difficulties, by arming the elements againft his adverfaries, thunder, lightning, hail and tempeft, with darknefs and alarming horrors.

God

God is here Majestically introduced, encompassed with all the powers of nature, with his Armory, and his instruments of vengeance around him.

XIX. A display of God's glory in Creation, a most beautiful allusion to the Sun coming out of his chamber like a bridegroom at midnight (the usual custom in Jerusalem when he was attended by his friends, with glaring lights and torches, parading the streets of the City) and rejoicing as a strong Man to run his race, conscious and confident of his own strength.

XX. XXI. Are fervent and devout prayers of the People for their King, they were chanted as Songs of triumph after victory and deliverances. Military exploits against Syria, and Ammon, Nations abounding in chariots and horsemen.

XXII. This Pathetic Psalm was composed by David at Mehanaim. God had appeared to him on the spot, by his Angel, during the rage of the Pestilence. David feelingly recollects this awful interview, and how he had here tenderly pleaded with God in behalf of his people, and afresh recounts his sorrows and deep distress.

Our Saviour, on the Cross, repeated this Epitome of his sufferings and death, reminding as it were, his Heavenly Father, he was now fulfilling
all

all the prophecies in that Psalm, and claiming the gracious promises, to his disciples and followers.*

XXIII. An incomparable Ode of the pastoral kind, the Sentiments are all borrowed from the Shepherd's life and character, and David had been a Shepherd. The Allusion is beautifully preserved throughout. It deserves the highest commendation, for its purity, simplicity and elegance, a celebrated Poet has restored it to harmony.

The watchful care of providence, is represented as leading and guiding his steps along the green pastures, beside the still waters, in the paths of peace, security and happiness, even through the Valley of the shadow of death, the Shepherd's crook and his rod should uphold and protect him.

XXIV. This Psalm was composed by David when he brought the Ark from the house of Obed-edom, to Mount Sion in Jerusalem, it was sung in two parts. The questions and responses at the end thus chanted, are highly pleasing, elegant and beautiful, and the two first

* Compare verse xviii. with MAT. xxvii. and xxxv.

verses were sung by all the company in the procession.

XXV. David in this Psalm expresses his humility, contrition, and dejection, it was composed after he had given orders so destructive to Uriah, for in all his distresses before, he confidentially asserts and exults in his innocence.

Each verse begins successively with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

XXVI. XXVII. XXVIII. Are Hymns made in seasons of deep distress, but before the former, as the Royal Psalmist in all of them strongly asserts his innocence. "I will wash my hands in innocency" alluding to the custom of the Jews washing their hands in token of innocence and purity, before prayer and publick worship. The twenty-seventh was composed when he placed his Family under the guardianship of the King of Moab who was their relation.

XXIX. A Psalm appointed to be sung in storms, thunder, lightning and tempest, most probably the elements had at this time facilitated some signal victory over his Enemies.

XXX. The Psalm David commanded to be sung at the dedication of his Palace; and again
after

after his return from his flight and Absalom's rebellion, when he was restored to the Ark, and the publick worship of God in the Tabernacle.

XXXI. David saved, as it were, by a miracle, from falling into the hands of Saul, fled from Keilah to the Wilderness of Maon, here prays for safety and support. The words Our Saviour pronounced when expiring on the Cross, are a part of verse the fifth. " Into thy hands I commit my spirit," the last proof, before his death, which he gave the Jews of his being, notwithstanding his sufferings, the true Messiah, the Son of David.

XXXII, Contains a general confession for sin, used on days of expiation, and national humiliation. The latter part records many wise rules and axioms for the conduct of life.

XXXIII. A Hymn of Praise and Thanksgiving for some signal deliverance. An allusion to the overthrow of Pharoah and his Host, and a beautiful one representing the Horse as a vain thing for safety ; at this time the oriental cavalry constituted the power and strength of their Armies.

XXXIV. A Psalm wrote by David on his deliverance from Achish King of Gath. Wise

and most persuasive arguments to trust in God, elegantly varied and enforced from his own experience. Strength and Magnanimity are of themselves no security from want and distress, " young
 " Lions lack and suffer hunger, they that seek
 " the Lord shall not want any good thing.

Another Psalm where each verse begins with the letters of the alphabet.

XXXV. A Psalm composed under the bitterest persecutions from Saul, Doeg, and the Ziphites. Imprecations so severe have made some question the piety and charity of David, but put them in the future tense the objection vanishes, and the Psalm may be a prophecy respecting them.

XXXVI. A Psalm which contrasts the malice and treachery of Saul with the faithfulness and goodness of God.

It seems composed by David when Saul's jealousy first broke out, and under the mask of friendship, he endeavoured to ruin and even to murder him.

XXXVII. The Psalmist writes purposely for the consolation of the afflicted, pathetically enters into all their feelings, most wisely directs and encourages them. Under the belief of an equal Providence, David revives and comforts the
 sufferer

sufferer with the sure hopes that obedience and patient submission must necessarily end in happiness. The Prosperity of the wicked however flattering vanishes and is often reversed.

Every other verse begins successively with the letters of the alphabet.

XXXVIII. Expresses his very deplorable condition, his extreme misery, and sincere repentance. It is called a Psalm of remembrance, wherein he represents the deep distress he felt, on taking a review of past iniquities during a present scene of grievous sufferings.

XXXIX. A Psalm occasioned by some distress which endangered his life, and led him to the many pathetic and elegant reflections on the vanity and shortness of human life, which are here expressed.

XL. Devout expressions of gratitude for some extraordinary blessings, and most faithful promises of obedience in return. The Apostle Paul writing to the Jews endeavours from this very Psalm to convince them of the defectiveness of the Mosaic offerings for sin, and the necessity of the propitiatory Sacrifice of Christ.

XLII. This elegant address to the feelings concludes the first Book of the Psalms.

The blessedness of those who consider the poor. It is said to have been composed during Absalom's insurrection. The virtue is warmly recommended to universal practice, and David ascribes his own deliverance and preservation, solely to the benevolence of the Supreme Being.

XLIII. More Psalms during Absalom's insurrection when David was driven from Jerusalem, and banished from the house of God on Mount Sion.

The fluctuations of hope and despondency are described with all the charms of poetry, and with all the pathos of distress. Despair is contrasted with hope throughout, but the Psalmist elegantly concludes with a repetition in favour of the ascendancy of hope.

“ Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him,
 ‘ he is the health of my countenance and my
 ‘ God ” Disregard to method is beautifully expressive of his sorrow.

XLIV. Is a Psalm wrote long after David's death by some Prophet, when the church was in extreme misery, and alludes to the oppression and sufferings of the Jews under the Moabites,
 Canaanites

Canaanites and Philistines, who as their Lords and Conquerors imposed upon them Idolatry.

XLV A Song of Loves. A chosen band of Virgins assembled, and encircled the bride at the Jewish marriages, singing a Hymn or Anthem in honour of her espousals. This is said to be the ode rehearsed at the celebration of Solomon's marriage with Pharoah's Daughter Queen Shulamite, the ideas pleasingly allude to some happy marriage.

XLVI. An elegant and triumphal ode on the blessings of peace, composed by David after some signal victory over Syria, when he possessed himself of their chariots and made the Kingdom tributary.

XLVII. A Hymn of great joy, sung before the Ark.

XLVIII. A description and eulogium, on the celebrated City of Jerusalem, when in its highest glory, the magnificent Temple on Mount Moriah, the Palace called Lebanon Grove, because all of Cedar, Solomon's sumptuous porch and seat of judgment, and Millo a spacious beautiful square where the People met on festivals and days of rejoicing, some have represented it as commencing

mencing from the steps of the Palace, and ending on Mount Moriah, in full view of an Edifice, the ornament and glory of a World.

XLIX. The Psalmist in this composition has made use of every art to improve and ennoble his subject. The highest wisdom was supposed to consist in discovering the mysterious meaning of a parable or riddle; in order to excite the greater attention he tells you, he inclines his ear to a parable, and opens his dark saying on the harp, and then bursts forth into an historical commemoration of God's mercies to his People and the wisest instructions.

L. Asaph composed this Psalm, probably a contemporary with Jehosaphat or Hezekiah.

It is highly instructive and full of Majesty, a Tribunal is erected, the Judge on the Bench, Witnesses and Delinquents summoned, sentence is pronounced, the most animated striking and awful expostulation and speech from the Judge, surpassing all description. The cattle on a thousand hills, should be, the cattle of the owners of a thousand hills, are mine.

LI. A very affecting penitential Psalm, wrote under the emotions excited by the Prophet Nathan's reproof, a most excellent model of self-abasement

abasement, teaching us in what manner we ought to lament our sins, strongly painting a wounded conscience, heartfelt anguish and poignant grief. David arrayed his sack-cloth in the deepest mourning, thus distinguished himself, and attended in person at its rehearsal.

LII. On Doeg's spiteful information, which caused the High Priests Death and four-score others. Doeg was himself the Executioner. After the accusation in the fourth verse, the Apostrophe is strikingly beautiful, and the sentiment very wise and instructive. A Tyrant glorying in mischief, glories in disgrace, in the same proportion as he departs from virtue, he lessens worth of character and true dignity. The story is recorded in the first Book of Samuel,* and exhibits the sad consequences ensuing from the change of Government and their rejecting God.

The Priests were now destroyed and none to attend the Ark, a fulfilling of the Prophecy which foretold the destruction of Eli's house in one day.

LIII. This Psalm is almost word for word as the fourteenth. A little variation seems made to accommodate it to the present occasion, which was Achitophel's very artful, but cruel advice

to

Samuel xxii. ix.

to Abfalom, to pursue David, and put him to death.

LIV. Occasioned by the Ziphites invitation to Saul and their persecution of David, it is supposed the two last verses were added afterwards. The History is related in the first Book of Samuel.*

LV. A Psalm composed in the very beginning of Abfaloms rebellion. The intended flight is beautifully expressed, " O that I had wings like " a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest."

It is very picturesque and pathetic, and no one can read some parts of it without the tenderest emotions.

LVI. At a time David was blocked up by the Philistines in Gath. Still he is comforted, " Thou tellest my wanderings, art a witness to my " distress, as a vagabond, fleeing here and there. " Put thou my tears into thy bottle, let them " not gush unheeded, catch them as they drop."

LVII. David overwhelmed with danger and distress, here pathetically calls forth every tender affection, and in anguish, pours out his soul to God. He was now close hid and blocked up in a
cave,

Samuel.xxiii. xix,

cave three thousand soldiers surrounded him, and seeking him out.

LVIII. Under persecution when David at Saul's council-board was declared a Traitor and out-lawed. A Psalm most beautiful in its imaginary, suited to the Genius of the East, in an animated stile describing the quick and terrible destruction of the wicked, by a variety of poetic, and very significant emblems and allusions.

LIX. A Psalm of Deliverance, and a noble vindication of his Innocence, composed after Michal (Saul's Daughter, and David's Wife) had effected his escape, by letting him down from a window. The History is recorded in the first Book of Samuel. A mind so composed and at peace is a forcible proof of faith and devotion.

LX. A Grand Commemoration Anthem, recording the signal victories over the Enemies of Israel, especially in Mesopotamia and Idumea, where, at one time, no less than twelve thousand were slain in the Valley of Salt.

Recorded in the second Book of Samuel,* and Book of Chronicles.†

Vol. II.

B b

Moab

* II. Sam. Chap. viii. † Chronicles xviii. iii. iv.

Moab is my wash-pot (contemptible slaves) over Edom will I cast out my shoe. An Emblem and badge of abject slavery.

LXI. Devout supplications to God, during his persecutions from Saul or his flight from Absalom.

LXII. A Psalm composed after the defeat of Absalom, but before his return to Jerusalem. Devout professions of Faith and confidence in God.

LXIII. The History of this Psalm is recorded in the first Book of Samuel.†

David was then under bitter persecution, in the Wilderness of Judah, drove from one lurking-place to another, and yet warmly expresses his fervent piety with a cheerful spirit of devotion.

LXIV. The Court of Saul, to ingratiate themselves with the King, aspersed the character of David with the utmost virulence, and David composed this Psalm and prayer to God when he received the information.

LXV. A Psalm of Thanksgiving, for deliverance after some long drought or famine, displaying

† I. Samuel xxii. v. xxiii. xiv. xv.

ing the glories and beauty of the natural and ordinary works of providence, and awfully recognizing the extraordinary and tremendous, wisely asserting that the blessedness of Man depends on his near approaches to his Maker.

LXVI. A commemoration of some signal deliverance or victory over the Philistines after peace was restored.

LXVII. LXVIII. Anthems in the procession when the Ark was brought to Jerusalem. A chosen band of singers walked first in the train, these were followed by the players on instruments, and in the midst of them a virgin train with timbrel and voice. David laid aside his robes and ensigns of royalty, with a linen ephod, in a Levites dress, he tuned his harp and accompanied the singers.

Hymns of high sublimity and grandeur, full of noble images and poetic fire.

LXIX. A Psalm under deep affliction and persecution, the inspired writers of the new Testament appeal to it as a Prophecy of the sufferings of Our Saviour, and the subsequent punishment of the Jews for infidelity.

LXX. Almost a repetition of the last part of the fortieth Psalm, and made use of by David during Absalom's rebellion.

B b 2

LXXI. This

LXXI. This elegant composition was wrote by David in the decline of life. The Jewish commentators had declared the sufferings in this Psalm to be typical of the Messiah, Our Saviour in the very crisis of his agonies on the Cross, refers to them (verse xi.) and thereby gave the Jews a striking proof of his being the Messiah.

LXXII. The Royal Psalmist fired with a holy rapture, recommends his Son and Successor to the Protection of God, and prophetically enlarges on all the blessings of his Reign. It was David's last and composed not long before his death.

Solomon's Coronation Anthem.

David now assembled all his People and made that wise settlement between his Son and them. The meeting and solemnity were truly grand and royal, a powerful Prince, and all the states of his Kingdom religiously assembled, and feasted with royal munificence. The Government thus wisely established produced forty years Prosperity and Peace.

LXXIII. Commences the third Book of Psalms, and consists of seventeen. They are principally on subjects of sorrow, as the extraordinary providence very visibly declined. This is a Psalm of Asaph the Seer. With elegance and beautiful simplicity, the Prophet confesses
how

how he was induced to envy the prosperity of the wicked, and tells what rectified his judgment, gained him a perfect victory over his prejudices, and the many advantages arising from it.

LXXIV. The Author of this Psalm was a descendant of Asaph, and probably had been permitted to stay in Judæa after the Chaldæans possessed the land, the sad subject of it is, the Demolition of the Temple, Destruction of the City, and Desolation of the country.

LXXV. A Song of Triumph sung on the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian army commanded by Senna-Cherib, in the reign of Hezekiah, but probably composed by David on his accession.

LXXVI. A Grand Commemoration of a famous Victory, called a Song upon Assyria, it was adopted on the same occasion as the former, and sung when the Chaldæan army was destroyed before Jerusalem. The striking reflection in the tenth verse was very significant of their haughty menaces and disgraceful defeat. "Surely the
" wrath man shall praise thee : the remainder of
" wrath shalt thou restrain." Which will you admire most? its simplicity, wisdom, or sublimity?

LXXVII. The

LXXVII. The Author, under the heaviest afflictions and most dejected state of mind, records the national calamities of the Jews. It was composed during their captivity in Babylon. The Psalmist consoles his captive brethren with hopes of deliverance, and to alleviate their sufferings, he enumerates the miracles and support God had wrought in their favour, and formerly afforded them.

LXXVIII. A pathetic Narrative of the many mercies and miracles God had wrought for Israel. An abstract of the Jewish history from their bondage to the reign of David.

LXXIV. This Psalm is wrote on the same occasion as the Seventy-fourth, the destruction of the Temple and the City, a most sad picture of distress, national and personal. The Jews with great propriety adopted it when in captivity, suffering under Nebuchadnezzar.

LXXX. Asaph the Seer, in the reign of Hezekiah, composed this Psalm, when the Assyrian army was surrounding Jerusalem. The elegant allusion and comparison of Israel to a vine, is wonderfully pathetic, and highly emblematical of their situation; and the repetition in the last verse animated and divinely poetic.

LXXXI. The

LXXXI. The Feast of the New Moon, a celebrated Jewish Festival, was always proclaimed by the sound of trumpets, on the first day of the seventh month. This highly, elegant, lively, and beautiful Hymn was composed on that occasion.

LXXXII. During the reign of Hezekiah, corruption had insinuated itself into the higher Courts, and prevented the impartial administration of justice. The Author of this Psalm, in order to correct the abuse, represents to the Judges the Omnipresence of God; He was Himself present—He Himself presided at all their Tribunals.

LXXXIII. This Psalm was first composed on account of some formidable alliance and confederacy, supposed to be that of Moab and Ammon; it was afterwards revived and used on similar occasions.

LXXXIV. When David was driven from Jerusalem, and no access either to the Ark or Tabernacle, He then composed this very beautiful Ode, expressing his earnest breathings, and longings, to be restored to the privileges of public worship.

LXXXV. A Song of Thanksgiving on David's return to Jerusalem after Absalom's rebellion,
and

and afterwards used by the Israelites upon their return from the seventy years captivity in Babylon, during the interruption to the building of their new Temple.

LXXXVI. A Psalm, or rather a devout Prayer of David's under Saul's persecution, and used during his flight from Abfalom.

LXXXVII. The High Praises of Jerusalem.

LXXXVIII. A Psalm of Instructions by Heman the Ezrahite. A most inimitable Picture of Despondency.

LXXXIV. A Psalm wrote in the reign of Zedekiah, whose sad and deplorable fate he laments, and also the destruction of the City and Temple.

XC. Commencing the fourth Book. A pathetic Hymn of Moses, elegantly descriptive of Mortality, it was wrote after the return of the Spies, on God's pronouncing that terrible and righteous judgment. " I will smite this people with a pestilence and disinherit them." Moses's fervent prayer averted the immediate execution, but, of those men, only Caleb and Joshua, and the very young, those under twenty years of age, did see the land of Canaan.†

XCI. A

† Numbers xiv.

XCI. A Psalm composed after the raging and devastation of a Pestilence, full of consolation and encouragement to those who survived. A Prophecy also of God's protection, and care over good Men, applied to our Saviour. The words (in the eleventh and twelfth verses) were made use of by the Tempter in the Wilderness.

XCII. A Sabbath-day Hymn, exciting the Israelites to those exercises, and effusions of praise and gratitude, the peculiar duty of the Sabbath. The Rabbies have called it Adam's Song of Praise on the first Sabbath, but others think it was wrote in the declension of the Jewish empire.

XCIII. An Ode, by David, on Peace and Tranquility, extolling the Power and Majesty of God.

XCIV. A Hymn of great Sublimity and Beauty. Religion our sheet anchor, and amidst life's trials and troubles our only sure support and consolation.

The Argument from ourselves, is wonderfully wise and conclusive, respecting the presence and knowledge of God. " He that planteth the
" ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the

VOE. II.

C c

„ eye,

“ eye, shall he not see? He that teacheth man
“ knowledge, shall he not know?”

XCV. David's Directions and Instructions for the service of the Temple, to excite Reverence and Attention in the Audience.

XCVI. A Psalm of David, sung before the Ark, as it was bringing to Mount Sion.

XCVII. A Psalm composed on its being placed there. This Hymn was made use of on his re-establishment and return from Jerusalem after Absalom's death.

XCVIII. and XCIX. Beautiful and highly animated Commemoration Anthems, Triumphal Odes, after signal Victories, and they are referred to as Prophecies.

C. A most lively and glorious Exhortation to praise God. Sung while the Sacrifices of Thanksgiving were offering up.

CI. A Solemn Vow. David's pious Resolution to guide well his House, his People, and his Kingdom; a noble profession of Godliness, and highly to his honour.

CII. A Penitential Psalm, written in deep affliction during the captivity in Babylon. The
Author

Author unknown, but the sentiments are wonderfully pathetic, and adapted to seasons of distress.

CIII. Reflections on Recovery after a dangerous Sickness. In the latter part, David gives a noble and sublime idea of God's mercy and placability, corresponding with his Parental and tender feelings towards his Creatures.

CIV. An exquisitely beautiful Hymn, lofty and full of Majesty. Composed by David in the Forest of Hareth, surrounded by Pastoral Scenes which he enchantingly describes. Universal nature depends on its Almighty Creator. He withdraws his breath, they die ; he breathes, and they revive. The idea expressed in the third verse, fills you with wonder and abasement. The serene deliberate walk of the Deity upon a Creature, while in all the fierceness of velocity, is a poetic flight conceived with inimitable beauty.

CV. Composed by David at the High Festival Sacrifice, and it was sung before the Ark, as recorded in the first Book of Chronicles.* It was adopted as a Commemoration Anthem after his glorious victories over the Philistines. A brief summary of the Jewish History suited to Children and Foreigners.

C c 2

Chronicles xvi. vii.

CVI.

CVI. A Psalm for publick Worship, grateful Acknowledgments and Thanksgivings. It is also a sad narrative of the People's rebellion, their high Ingratitude, and God's unwearied Forbearance. It was wrote in the time of the Israelites captivity and dispersion; a suitable Appendix to the former.*

CVII. A Call and Invitation to All, to acknowledge the true God, to praise Him for his Mercies, and to tremble at his Judgments. He points out a variety of afflictive cases, and each of them prove, that there are no sufferings, however grievous, beyond the reach of the power and goodness of God. With elegance and high sublimity, it describes God's administrative providence against Unbelievers. The dangers of a Sea Voyage, a terrible Storm and instantaneous Calm are beautifully picturesque, inconceivably expressive. God commands—the Sea roars and swells impetuous—the Waves ascend to Heaven and down to the deep—and again, at the voice of God, a silence and a dead calm instantaneously follow. The contrast and transition how poetic?

CVIII. This Psalm is a repetition of the fifty-seventh and sixtieth, and now revived as a prayer of thanksgiving and confidence in God.

CIX. A

* See verse xlvii.

CIX. A Psalm under Persecution. Reviewing David's merciful and mild temper, even towards his Enemies, and comparing it with the severity of these imprecations, this composition is supposed by some to be prophecies, and by others that the curses are David's Enemies on him, if you add the word, " saying " at the end of the fifth verse, it may be invariably read so throughout, the eighth verse is applied to Judas by the Apostle Peter.

CX. David's Prophecy respecting the Messiah, and Our Saviour informs us, it was the Holy Ghost who inspired the Royal Psalmist when he wrote it.

CXI. A Grateful Commemoration of the goodness of God, appointed to be sung on High Festivals.

CXII. Called David's Creed. A graceful and elegant picture of a good man in affluence, with the priviledges and rewards annexed to the character.

CXIII. This Psalm and five following were rehearsed at their Festivals, their new Moons, and on the Paschal Night, one of these were chosen by Our Saviour on that ever memorable occasion.

CXIV. A

CXIV. A beautiful allusion to the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt. After the convulsions and consternation of nature, the Psalmist strikes you with agreeable surprize, by drawing away the veil, and so awfully introducing the presence of the Almighty. " Tremble thou
" earth at the presence of the Lord, at the pre-
" sence of the God of Jacob."

CXV. A Song of Triumph after some victory over an Idolatrous Adversary. Contrasting the Idol Gods they worshipped, with Jehovah, the God of Israel.

CXVI. David's consolation under the distress he felt, at the revolt of some particular friends, during Absalom's rebellion. The support of God in trouble afforded him the highest pleasure, and was a powerful persuasive to love and serve him.

CXVII, A Psalm expressing Israels gratitude to God for so many distinguishing blessings and favours.

This is a prophesy of the general joy of all nations at the coming of the Messiah and propagation of the Gospel, and thus the Apostle Paul applies it.

CXVIII. A

CXVIII. A Song of Triumph. Victory is ascribed to God, his arm fought valiantly. It was wrote after David's settlement over all Israel and sung in parts.

To verse the twentieth was sung by David—Verses twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four were sung by the People. The Priests then pronounced the benediction, after which (verse twenty-eighth) the Psalmist begins again, and affirms, he will never be forgetful of his God. “Thou art my God, and I will praise thee, thou art my God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good ; for his mercy endureth for ever,”

CXIX. A Psalm divided into twenty-two stanza's or parts, and every stanza answering to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

The Royal Psalmist disengages the thoughts and affections of good men from the World, and fixes them on divine love, piety, and godliness, in order to make them more humble, meek, and harmless. Throughout the whole, he approves, admires, esteems and prefers religion and virtue for their own intrinsic worth and excellency, powerfully inviting you to the study, belief, and practise of your duty.

This Psalm is penned with great plainness and simplicity of style, suited to all capacities. It consists of one hundred and seventy-six verses,
and

and there are nine words almost of the same signification, " Law, Statutes, Precept, Commandments, Testimonies, Judgments, Word, Righteousness, Way," and but one single verse, where one or more of them are not found, and without any tautology. There is a great deal of art in repeating the same words so often, with so much variation of sense.

CXX. A Song of Excellencies, sung upon the steps leading up to the Temple on festivals and holydays, descriptive of the sufferings and distress they had endured in Babylon, and a prayer suited to their situation. This Psalm and the fourteen following are called songs of degrees.

CXXI. A Psalm composed by David during Absalom's rebellion. David sung himself the two first verses, and the People all burst forth and chanted the remainder.

CXXII. Composed for the Sabbath or solemn Feasts, and used by those who visited the Ark, David expresses his devout joy at the settlement of it.

CXXIII. One of David's first Psalms when the Israelites were without sword or spear, wrote under oppression and in the deepest distress.

The

The Evangelist St. Luke recommends it as a model of patience, and perseverance in prayer.

CXXIV. A commemoration of some signal victory and providential escape, supposed to be by thunder and lightning. The Psalmists extreme danger is beautifully figured by the greedy swallow of a wild beast, and by drowning.

CXXV. On the arrival of the Assyrian Monarch before Jerusalem. Hezekiah applied to the Prophet Isaiah, and these words so elegant sublime and poetical were dictated by the Prophet himself. The Safety of all those who trust in God.

CXXVI. Ezra's Hymn of encouragement on the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon. The benefit of afflictions experienced afterwards. " They who sow in tears
" shall reap in joy. He who goeth forth and
" weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubt-
" less come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves
" with him."

CXXVII. A Psalm of Solomon's, founded on a pious maxim.

" A man's heart deviseth his way, but the
" Lord directeth his steps." Written when he was planning the building of the Temple.

CXXVIII. A celebrated Marriage Ode. A Song of Solomon's, harmonious and in high esteem. A gradual rise of blessings.

CXXIX. By Ezra, on the threatnings and combinations of the neighbouring states opposing their rebuilding Jerusalem.

CXXX. A Psalm of David under the rebukes of his conscience, and the dread of having offended God. A solemn and devout address for forgiveness.

CXXXI. Under the malicious reports of his aspiring to the Throne, during the life time of Saul, David wrote this solemn appeal and answer to his accusers.

CXXXII. A Psalm of Solomon's on his removal of the Ark. He appointed it as a set form of prayer in the Temple, and it is a Prophecy of Samuel's.†

CXXXIII. On the union of the houses of Israel and Judah, under David, and a great animosity subsisting among the Tribes at Absalom's death, David re-published this short exhortation to unity and brotherly love.

CXXXIV. A

† 2 Samuel vii. v. xii.

CXXXIV. A Levite's Hymn, sung on shutting the gates of the Temple, recommending vigilance and a pious discharge of duty. The two first verses were sung by the People, and the last is a Levite's answer.

CXXXV. A Morning Hymn, sung by those who slept in the Temple, on the first opening of the gates.

CXXXVI. A part of the daily service of the Temple. A commemoration of the attributes of God. All of them subjects of devout praise and thanksgiving, but his mercy and goodness more particularly, hence the elegant conclusion of every verse, "for his mercy endureth for ever."

This was David's own adding, and it was rehearsed and sung in the same manner by Solomon, Jehosaphat, and others.

CXXXVII. A Psalm wrote by the Prophet Jeremiah for the use of those who were going into captivity. A beautiful and most pathetic composition. A citizen of Jerusalem represented as banished to Babylon, sitting mournfully by the river side, and looking towards his dear Country. His new masters ask of him a song and a tune on his harp, the Jew with indignation and grief, cries out, how shall I sing the Lord's song
in

in a strange land, and then tenderly bursts out,
 "If I forget thee, O' Jerusalem, let my right hand
 forget her cunning, if I do not remember thee,
 let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."

CXXXVIII. Composed by David soon after his ascension, an acknowledgment of God's goodness in advancing him to the Throne, from scenes of persecution and deep distress. The Prophets Haggai and Zachariah introduced it into the service of the Temple, after the captivity.

CXXXIX. Deservedly esteemed the most interesting, noble, and sublime of all the Book of Psalms. David wrote it as a full answer to the aspersions on his character. A serious and very solemn appeal to God. It begins with an awful survey of his Omniscience, the noblest sublime and most elevated strain of thought is then pursued.

Our Actions, Thoughts, whole Life, naked and open to the view of God. A far off before I can conceive or form a thought, thou knowest it, my secret whisper, and all my meaning, before my tongue can utter it.

From such power or knowledge, whither can I flee? The wings of the morning, the Sun beams
 in

in point of swiftness avail me nothing, thy swifter hand would first arrive, and arrest me every where, in Heaven above or Hell below.

Darkness is no veil or covering, with equal ease, the eye of God pervades the darkest medium or the brightest, and seeing me (when yet as it were, there was none of me) now formed and made up of flesh and bone, much more O' God must thou see me and know me, since thou hast not only made me and fashioned me, but by thy right hand hath led me, and to the present moment upheld, conducted and disposed of me. Good God! how penetrating? how incomprehensible?

CXL. A Psalm under Saul's persecution, the calumnies of Doeg, and the treachery of the Ziphites. In grateful remembrance of God's deliverance, David appointed it to be sung and publickly rehearsed on his accession.

CXLI. A Psalm of David, composed the night before his flight to Achish, King of Gath, after the bloody slaughter of Ahimelec and his Priests praying for Caution, Prudence, and Preservation amidst the idolatries of the Philistines.

CXLII. An earnest and devout supplication to God in deep distress, when David was shut up
and

and concealed in the cave of Engedi. The silent workings of his mind when his Safety depended on his stillness.

CXLIII. The last of David's Penitential Psalms, expressing the strongest sense and indignation against guilt, and very pathetic expostulations with God, when he was on his flight from Absalom and passing over Jordan by night.

CXLIV. A grateful commemoration of a victory over the Philistines soon after David's accession.

CXLV. A very elegant Psalm of praise and thanksgiving. The Jews were so fond of this devout and very beautiful ode, that they believed every one who would repeat it three times every day, would be inhabitants of the Heavenly Canaan.

CXLVI. A Psalm composed by some pious Jew after the captivity. One from experience taught, not to put his trust in Princes. In order to elevate the Minds of the Singers to the highest pitch of joy and rapture, it ends with Hallelujah—Praise ye the Lord.

CXLVII.

CXLVII. National thanksgivings to God, for the revelation of his will and for his excellent Laws, by Nehemiah, sung at the new dedication of the second Temple.

CXLVIII. A lively animated Invocation on all Creatures individually to worship God their Creator. Ideas enchantingly pleasing, glowing with holy rapture and pure devotion. A Psalm of David, wrote in the most flourishing state of his Kingdom, personal Thankgivings too inadequate to the divine blessings he enjoyed. All Creation is summoned forth to join him.

CXLIX. CL. Magnificent Commemorations of Signal Victories, and Military Odes, sung before engagements, and during their marches.

Besides these Psalms, one more is said to be wrote by David, very young, on his encounter with Goliath.

1. " I WAS small, the least among my Brethren,
" The youngest in my Father's house.
2. " My hands made an Organ,
" And my Fingers tuned the Harp.

3. " And

3. " And who shall declare to my Lord ?
" The Lord, He himself shall hear *me*.
4. " He sent his Angel out,
" He took me from my Father's sheep,
" And anointed me with the oil of his anointment,
5. " My Brethren were many and great,
" But the Lord did not think well of *them*.
6. " I went out to encounter the Stranger,
" He curs'd me by his Idols and Gods.
7. " Three stones cast I, which pierced his Forehead
" In the strength of the Lord, he lay prostrate.
8. " Drawing out his Sword, I cut off his head,
" And took away the Reproach from my Country.

This Composition may be supposed too puerile to be admitted, as the Psalms of David abound with Images highly poetical and elegant, his thoughts inexpressibly grand, lofty, elevated, and sublime.

E S S A Y XXII.

O N T H E

WORKS OF SOLOMON.

BOOK OF PROVERBS.

ECCLESIASTES—SONGS.

P R O V E R B S.

SOLOMON was the first Author properly called a Moralift. His Book contains a rich flore of Wisdom, and Divine Knowledge, highly instructive, of infinite use to the right conduct of the present Life, and to the still more important interests of a future. It is a

VOL. II.

E c

Book

Book often referred to by the Evangelical Writers, and was the result of consideration and experience in maturer life, when the Royal Preacher had multiplied his stores from a long observation on Men and the World. His wise Reflections and moral Sayings are concisely expressed, simple and plain, but solid and good. The Proverbs generally consist of two Sentences, the second is sometimes a reduplication, sometimes an explanation, and sometimes a contrast and opposition to the first.

A detached piece of History may be neither understood nor retained, but a few of these, well chosen and digested, will be very pertinently useful on many occasions. Some one or other of them may suit the moment, strike the fancy and imagination, and be almost mechanically remembered, short—concise—independent Wise-Sayings, subjects of our Contemplation and regulators of our Conduct.

The Ancients were used to divide all Books into verses, and the learning of the East consisted much in interpreting Riddles—Parables—Pithy Sentences; and Solomon, in a reign of forty years, uninterrupted Peace, excelled much in all these lively sports and fancies. He spoke more than three thousand, and it was a frequent, entertaining

tertaining, and instructive amusement of those times, to be resolving and explaining them.

Some were consecrated in Temples and attributed to the Gods, too wise for Mortals. They were engraven on Columns, Statues, Pillars, Altars, Busts and Coins. The celebrated Speakers and Writers were popularly revered, and noticed with honorary titles, as in Arts and Sciences, an elegant Painter, Architect or Statuary; or in Literature, a Linguist, a Poet or Historian.

The Ancients ascribed wonderful power and efficacy to them, they were influential as charms, to allay impetuosity and passion, to reclaim the vicious, as well as excitements to emulation, glory and virtue. They very much preferred them to a serious studied reproof, to a long elaborate discourse. It was the fashion of the times to write thus loosely and without coherence, it led you to think, compare, apply, to habits of reflection and improvement.

Princes sent their Sayings and Riddles to one another, it was a great honour to unveil their Mystery, the entertainment of a Drawing-room or a Court, and a reward was very usually held out to the Person who unriddled them the first.

As no one subject is long pursued, very little order is observed throughout the Book. It is divided into five parts. The first extends to the tenth Chapter, and is a highly pleasing Preface or Introduction, most picturesque and beautiful. Exhortations from an experienced Tutor to his Pupil, wherein he employs Wit, Ridicule, the blushes of ingenuous Modesty, and all the arts of Persuasion, in sweet and ever-varying Language, to engage and interest you in the cause and defence of Innocence and Piety.

The second part ends at the seventeenth verse of the twenty-second Chapter, and contains plain and simple Rules and Maxims adapted to the instruction of Youth, and they might be intended by Solomon for his Son. To use his own Simile, "they are Apples of Gold, in Pictures of Silver."

The third part carries you on to the twenty-fifth Chapter; for a more lively effect, the Tutor is here supposed to address his Pupil as present, his Exhortations and Instructions are therefore more connected.

The fourth part ends at the thirtieth Chapter, and is supposed to have been added to the Book after Solomon's death.

The

The fifth contains a fragment of some prudent Admonitions, which Agur delivered to his Pupils Ithiel and Ucal, and also his Prophecy, Prayer, and Confession.

Agur commences his address to his Pupils with a modest and humble sense of his own nothingness and Ignorance; Agur claims no divine inspiration, at least an imperfect and incomprehensive one. Knowledge belongeth unto God, is his prerogative alone, and therefore you Ithiel and Ucal must not expect Divine Mysteries from me, or any man, but from the word of God: thus wisely inculcating in his Pupils a humble teachable temper, impressing on them the weakness of all human understanding, and the imperfection of its highest attainments.

Agur's devout and fervent Prayer to God follows this very modest Introduction.

“ Two things have I required of Thee, O
 “ God! deny me not them before I die. Re-
 “ move from me Vanity and Lies; give me
 “ neither Poverty nor Riches, feed me with
 “ Food convenient for me, lest I be full and
 “ deny Thee, and say, who is the Lord? or
 “ lest I be poor and steal, and take the Name
 “ of my God in vain.” O! blessed moderation,
 in

In an age when Temporal Blessings were more expressly promised, and Spiritual less clearly understood.

Nothing can evince the justness and propriety of Agur's petition, nor redound so much to Agur's honour, as that his judgment should be confirmed by Divine Wisdom itself, "Give us this day our daily bread," implying like Agur's, a conditional request for a supply of such things as our situation in life requires, accompanied with a perfect submission, to the will of God.

Agur alludes to the custom of feeding Slaves, a certain measure of food was daily allowed them, they were kept secure from want, though they had nothing superfluous, in constant dependance, but receiving a daily supply, Agur prays only for daily subsistence, that he may be daily induced to return thanks, and renew his petition to God.

Wise and highly instructive are the reasons he assigns, lest I be full, and lie, and contemptuously say, who is the Lord? deny the being and providence of God (I can act and live on my own without him) or lest I be poor and
steal,

steal, and take the name of my God in vain, use a false oath to vindicate myself, when I am suspected and accused, for theft was not punished by death, but by restitution, fine or penalty, and an oath was administered to the accused person, when sufficient evidence was wanted, oaths were then held most sacred, and an ingenuous mind might be induced to confess his fault, rather than increase his guilt by perjury.

Many more wise directions and rules of conduct, this good man gives his pupils, accuse no servant rashly, or maliciously, there are monsters so unnatural as to curse even their parents, Agur charges them not to deride a parent, though it be with a look or a gesture, "the eye that mocketh his Father, and despiseth to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valley shall pick it out, and the young Eagle shall eat it."

He next guards them against pride and insolence, a haughty carriage and a contemptuous look, and with the keenest rebuke, he lashes the extortioner, and him that would grind the poor. After this, Agur names the industrious animals, those who provide their food in the Summer, and proposes them to his pupils, as examples of wisdom, and concludes his lecture,
by

by exhorting them earnestly to penitence, “ if
 “ thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself,
 “ or if thou hast thought evil, lay thy hand
 “ upon thy mouth, do not justify or excuse it,
 “ silently and seriously consider the evil of it,
 “ repent, and do so no more.

The last Chapter is Queen Bathsheba's passionate, motherly address, and good council to her Son Solomon, after he had ascended the throne of Israel, wise and pious advice, such a regulation of life and conduct, as would maintain vigour of body, and purity of mind; a pressing invitation to temperance, and a freedom from all excesses. It is not for Kings to drink wine, O my Son! give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, let him drink, forgetting his poverty, and remembering his misery no more, allay his cares, and fears, and cheer his spirits. Seating her Son then on his Throne, in his high Court of Justice, she reminds him of a strict adherence to the laws, a firmness of mind not to be shook, uninfluenced by partiality or indulgence. “ As a Judge, my Son, open thy mouth to the dumb, and for those under sentence to die. Judge a righteous judgment, and be the poor man's friend, and counsellor.”

The

The remaining part of Bathsheba's speech, is her wise directions concerning Matrimony, in the elegant simplicity and sweetest line of domestic life, she exhibits a beautiful and highly finished portrait of a virtuous Woman and a good Wife.

O N T H E
B O O K
O F
E C C L E S I A S T E S.

IN the decline of life, upon a serious review of all that had passed, Solomon wrote his Book of Ecclesiastes or the Preacher. He here annalizes his large experience and observations on the Vanity even of the serious and thoughtful, as well as the gay and prosperous scenes of human life.

A curious and critical Inquiry after Happiness, and the Royal Preacher informs you, how far you may successfully pursue, and acquire it.

Well grounded and highly instructive are his Reflections on the Study of Wisdom. The utter vanity and insufficiency of Riches, Titles,

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F f

Honours

Honours to procure it. Ambition how usually destructive to ourselves and others. The deceit and danger of the outer form of Godliness, without the inward and substantial reality, and Solomon expatiates largely on all their littleness and insufficiency to happiness; and then lays down many wise and excellent Rules ensuring Tranquility, Peace, and Enjoyment to the careful and attentive observers of them.

S O L O M O N ' S W I S E M A X I M S .

Maintain a grateful thankful Heart, in the free use of all your Blessings.

A humble Acquiescence and Resignation to God, under all the Events which may befall us.

Devout and reverential Addresses, put up to God in sincerity of Heart, and a religious Performance of our Vows.

Patience and Submission under Sufferings and Oppression, unruffled by Sorrows, unrepining in Affliction.

Maintain Candour, Prudence and Moderation towards all Men.

Meekness,

Meekness, Charity, and Forbearance to all who have offended us.

Loyalty and Obedience to Superiors, Kindness and Humanity to all.

The wisest, safest, best Preparation for Death, Judgment, and Eternity, is the habitual Fear of God, and the keeping his Commandments.

The Book elegantly concludes with the awful reason assigned, most powerfully persuasive. " There is a day of future reckoning already announced, for every work, and every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Solomon well aware of the proneness of Youth (ever lively warm and hopeful) to prefer the agreeable and present, to the useful and future, observing how peculiarly amiable and lovely Wisdom is, at such a season, commences his last Chapter, with a Persuasive to early Piety, and the most highly finished Portrait of Old Age follows it, pencilled in a scientific and most masterly stile, beautifully expressive.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy Youth (the choicest period of thy life) before the

evil days come (serve Him now, He will keep you then) and the years draw nigh, in which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

Of the second verse Man is himself the subject. While the Sun (the emblem of the soul), or the Light (reason); or the Moon (instinct and its powers), or the Stars (luminaries of fancy, judgment, and experience stored up in the memory) be not darkened, nor the Clouds return after the Rain, one misery after another.

In the third and fourth verses the figure is varied, and your ideas are carried to the similitude of a House or Castle. In the day when the keepers of the house (the hands and arms) shall tremble, and the strong men (the feet and back) shall bow themselves, and the grinders (the teeth) shall cease because they are few, and and those that look out of the windows be darkened, so literally representing the eyes and the spectacles.

And the doors shall be shut to the street, (the mouth, passages for the voice, and to the stomach) when the sound of the grinding is low, (scarcely heard) and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, (easily waked, full of aches and pains) and all the Daughters of music shall be

be brought low, the organs such as the ears, lips, lungs, tongue and teeth, all deadened and impaired.

Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, (soon giddy, weary, out of breath) and fear shall be in the way (least they should be thrust, stumble or hurt), and the almond tree the forerunner of Spring (the emblem of the blossoms of age, the white and hoary locks) shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burthen (the lightest hop and its little song shall worry him) desire (of meat and drink and enjoyment) shall fail, because man goeth to his long home (the grave), and the mourners (a solemn procession) go about the streets, attendants on his funeral.

Or ever the silver cord be loosed (the spinal marrow beautifully white and shining), or the golden bowl be broken (containing the brain), or the pitcher be broken at the fountain (the vast capacious vein pouring into the heart, all the blood returning from the body), or the wheel (the high round arch of the great artery) broken at the cistern the heart, the left ventricle of which, in each systole, replenishes the wheel, which whirls the new made blood to all the parts of the body.

Then

Then shall the Dust return to the earth as it was; and the Spirit shall return unto God who made it.

ON THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONGS OF SOLOMON.

THE youthful Monarchs sprightly Odes, written in the warmth and luxuriance of fancy, amidst the gayest scenes of all his life.

They are wrote in the allegorical, mystical and sublime language of the East, a kind of Drama uttered in the names of several persons; they describe the love and happy marriage of two eminent persons in high and exalted stations, generally supposed to be Solomon himself, and Queen Shulamite, the Daughter of Pharoah, King of Egypt.

The

The flights of fancy in these gay and lively fallies, and the ever varying images, metaphors and figures throughout, strike you with surprize even at this distance, when so many of their beauties must be lost.

The forty-fifth Psalm, is an abridgment of this Song of Songs, and was the marriage ode publickly rehearsed at that solemnity, when a chosen band of young virgins, all in white, and bedecked with flowers, joyously met, encircling the bride, and chanted an Anthem, with the tabret and the harp, in honour of the happy Pair, and their Espousals.

These Songs are all of them of the pastoral kind, pleasingly descriptive of rural life, and the most enchanting domestic enjoyments. The Jewish writers represent it as a parable and mystery alluding to Christ and the Church, the reading of it was forbad at Jerusalem until the age of thirty years, which was their sacerdotal age, when reason grown riper, the affections were more composed and suited to contemplate its divine tendency, no doubt they had fears, lest a very juvenile reader should give too wide a scope to fancy, and attend too much to a literal understanding of it.

It

It is however a short, elegant, and beautiful Poem, in which the name of God is not once mentioned, and in which no one religious or moral duty is recommended, and it is never cited either by Our Saviour, or any one of his Apostles.



E S S A Y XXIII.

INTRODUCTION
TO THE
P R O P H E T S.
AND
L I F E
OF THE
P R O P H E T E L I J A H.

TO the first Ages, and to those who saw them performed, Miracles were the great proof of Revelation. To later Ages, the Prophecies afford a most unequivocal Proof, a permanent Miracle to all those who witness their fulfilment.

VOL. II.

G g

For

For the space of four hundred years, Jehovah had himself presided as Supreme Judge, Law-giver, and King over Israel. God was then pleased to elect Prophets, and they flourished in regular continued succession a thousand years.* Their Lives, Characters, Ministry, and Predictions, form a very interesting and most instructive part of the History. Their Denunciations are strikingly awful, their Promises, Messages, and information powerfully influential, persuasive, and consolatory. By a recluse life, austere manners, and a peculiar Garb, they were set apart and distinguished from the rest of the People, they were supported and provided for, sometimes by miracle; sometimes living in a kind of Brotherhood or Community, under some one as a superior; sometimes sequestered from the world, they wandered in Deserts or on Mountains, and slept in Caves, clad in hair skins or coarse woollen, and on mournful occasions in sackcloth and ashes, habituated to many hardships and the most simple stile of life, but yet they were looked up to as the established Oracles of their country, and consulted on all emergencies. The haughty and abandoned Prince was oft-times compelled to obey, although the rebuke should so enrage him, as to endanger the life of the Prophet.

* xlvii. Prophets & vi. Prophetesses.

Prophet. At Naioth, a very pleasant village near the city of Ramah, Samuel endowed and founded a College, and also a School for the young Prophets. Another was built by the Prophet Elisha on Mount Carmel, where he educated a number of young Students, and boarded them himself; and there were others at Jerusalem the capital, and at Bethel, Jericho and Gilgal, three celebrated and populous cities in Judæa.

The Spirit of God taught them in various Modes, conferring different degrees of illumination, in Visions, Dreams, and more absolute Converse and Revelations—By coincidence with the High Priest in the institutions of Urim and Thummim, called Light and Knowledge—By his Spirit superintending and guiding them in the exercise of their own understandings, directing them in the communication of that Knowledge which they derived from ordinary sources of intelligence.

Animated with holy ardour and zeal for God, they employed themselves in the exalted Office of teaching and reforming Mankind, no unworthy Passions or disingenuous Motives interfered with their wise and great Designs; by every exertion they instructed and reclaimed, reprov'd and threatened every rank and station, even

the most exalted, and those encircled in the highest Dignities, with a fearless assurance and sincerity, a manly courage commanding respect; and they evinced the integrity of their Characters, by zealously encountering Oppression, Malice, Torture and Death in the cause of Religion and Piety; firmly supporting trial of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, yea, moreover of Bonds and Imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain by the Sword, they wandered about, destitute, tormented, and afflicted. Suffered Martyrdom for that Righteousness, which, when impartially viewed, commanded Veneration, the highest Reverence and Esteem. They delivered their predictions openly and boldly in the streets and places of publick resort, they stuck them up on the gates of the Temple and the City walls. After the usual and familiar customs of the East, they sometimes prophesied by action, and they were strikingly impressive and awful, always corresponding with true dignity and decorum. Jeremiah put on bonds and hung a yoke about his neck, and walked publicly about the streets, strongly to intimate the subjection God was about to bring on Jerusalem. Isaiah, a Prince and a Prophet, bare-footed, and almost naked, as a sign of approaching distress, walked about
Jerusalem:

Jerusalem. Jeremiah broke the Potter's vessel, foreshewing desolation on Judæa; and in the reign of Zedekiah, when a confederacy was forming in Jerusalem with the neighbouring Kingdoms, to free themselves from Assyrian bondage, Jeremiah sent to each of the Ambassadors then present, a chain and a yoke, highly reproving them for their ill-timed revolt and opposition; in like manner Ezekiel prophesied by action when he removed all his Household goods, to excite attention in the People to the Calamities he had so awfully threatened and foretold; and you will read of a very fanciful Prophecy of Elisha, by arrows, a little before his death.

They were often inured to great hardships, and called upon to practice the Virtues of Self-denial and Mortification. Apart from the World they held converse with their God, and acquired in some way, very signal intimations, were employed on Embassies of high importance, oftentimes strikingly awful, warning, threatening, persuasively exhorting, reasoning, and inviting all.

Thus they drew away the veil from futurity, recorded the History of ages to come, predicted the glory of Kings unborn, of Empires yet to be formed, and they prophesied of their total destruc-

destruction and overthrow, during their meridian Splendour. By his Prophets, God was pleased to describe, centuries before their birth, and to call forth even by name, the Dispensers of his Mercies, or the future Instruments of his Vengeance.

The History of the Hebrew Republick, is almost one continued record of Prophecy, their Calamities and Captivities being foretold by their Prophets; but the grand object they had in view, was, describing most circumstantially, and with incredible minuteness and perspicuity the Messiah, and his Kingdom.

A blessing at first held out in general promises, described under figures, exemplified by types, and exhibited in institutions and living characters as the day spring from on high advanced, and afterwards expressly foretold in the full Lustre of Prophecy.

Every striking scene of suffering is as minutely delineated by the Prophets as if drawn on the spot, in the moment the decrees were unrolling and Vision exhibited in Reality. This wonderful spirit of Prophecy pervades all time, commences from the fall, extends to the final judgment the total dissolution of a World.

For

For some Prophecies are so incomprehensible and full of Majesty, as not to be explained by any circumstances in the life of Our Saviour on earth, and can only receive their accomplishment at his second coming. “ When he shall “ judge the World in righteousness.”

The language of the Four Greater and the Twelve Lesser Prophets is sublime and magnificent, strong, animated and impressive; a stile abounding with images of grandeur and Majesty; its bursts of eloquence, its earnest warmth, its affecting exhortations, and awful appeals, surpass every other composition in the World; their apt and well chosen similies are wonderfully striking; their figures highly picturesque and beautiful, bold, awful, and sublime.

In the year of the World, three thousand one hundred, and during the reign of Ahab King of Israel, Elijah the Prophet was sent with a very striking and awful message to that Idolatrous Prince. No one could ever say the Prophet died. Encompassed in a cloud, in a chariot all on fire, Elijah was seen ascending into Heaven in a whirlwind.

At the appointment of God Elijah was succeeded as a Prophet by Elifha.

In

In the second century afterwards seven hundred and thirty nine years before the birth of Our Saviour, Ifaiah the first of the Four Greater Prophets carried his highly memorable message to Ahaz King of Judah.

Ifaiah prophesied the destruction of the proudest City in the World, and it stood then in all its Glory.

“ Babylon the glory of Kingdoms, the beauty
 “ of the Chaldees it shall never be inhabited, the
 “ wild beasts of the deserts shall lie there, their
 “ houses full of doleful creatures, owls shall
 “ dwell there, and dragons in their Palaces. I
 “ will sweep it with the besom of Destruction
 “ saith the Lord.”

In another place, Ifaiah* holds up to your view, a man blaspheming his God, with his eyes uplifted to Heaven; suddenly his imprecations are awfully silenced by the rolling thunder and the voice of God, accompanied with darkness intense as to be felt—The picture of horror is complete—With all the graces of simplicity, the most winning and unaffected eloquence this Prophet familiarly converses with you, and not unfrequently embellishes his language with the tenderest most pathetic yearnings of humanity ;
 “ Can a Woman forget her sucking child ; that
 “ she

† Ifaiah viii. xxi. xxii.

“ she should not have compassion on the Son
 “ of her womb? yes she may forget; yet will I
 “ not forget thee, O’ Jerusalem.”

The style of Jeremiah, the second of the Four Greater Prophets, is still more adapted to the tender feelings of grief and despondency; and his Lamentations, are funeral odes, breathed out in sighs, most eloquently plaintive; it is said of Sorrow, that she never flowed in so natural, so tender, so prevailing a pathos, as in these mournful elegies.

The lively genius of Ezekiel highly spirited and fanciful, full of fire, impetuosity and vehemence, tremendous and tragical, a model of the eastern style unequalled in grandeur and Majesty. The Prophet wrote in Captivity, and his language, like the rolling thunder, must have roused the most desponding Jew.

Daniel, the Fourth and last of the Greater Prophets, amidst the luxury of an Asiatic Court, with honours next to royal, writes in a pensive style, grave, concise, perspicuous, flowing with historical ease, a perfect master of address, divinely eloquent; the images by which he chose to represent his Prophecies, are taken from the ensigns and armorial devices of those Nations,

for the Ram was the royal ensign of Persia, and the Goat the emblem or arms of Macedon.

A loftiness of Majesty, a stile animated and sublime, characterize the writings of all the Lesser Prophets, and one of them hurries you into all the alarm, consternation and amazing terror of a City, in the moment of destruction. " I hear
 " the noise, the noise, the crash of the whip,
 " the ratling of the wheels, the prancing of the
 " horses, the bounding of the chariots, I see the
 " spear and the bright sword, the shield is all
 " blood, the valiant are in scarlet, O' the carcasses, the carcasses, they stumble on the corpses. Thus bold is the colouring of the Prophet Nahum, when prophesying of an event to take place more than half a Century afterwards, and of a City then in its highest glory, metropolis of all the East. And the Prophet Habakkuk exulting with conscious dignity in his confidence and reliance on God, personates the pious man, and comforts himself with the full assurance of safety under the divine protection, even while armies were ravaging his country, and laying waste his lands.

In the ages the Prophets lived, it was the practice of all Nations to wrap up their discourses and especially religious truths in allegory, and
 our

our Saviour condescended to teach in parables and allusions. No language whatever could so wisely convey his divine information. It is always an instructive and a highly pleasing task to study and unravel them. The Grecian column moulders into dust; Sacred Writ remains, and holds up to view, the noblest, most exalted ideas of the power and Majesty of God, and impresses your mind with the fullest conviction of his Superintendency and ever watchful Providence.

O N T H E
P R O P H E T E L I J A H.

THE meaning of the word is, "My God, Jehovah is he," Elijah, the Prophet so highly favoured, is introduced in the seventeenth Chapter of the first Book of the Kings.

Elijah was a Tishbite, a Prophet of the City of Gilead, born at Thibbe, a town on the other side Jordan, in the Tribe of Gad, but we have no account at all of his parentage. To punish this Idolatrous Nation and bring them to repentance, and as a means of restoring them to the favour of God, the Prophet was sent to Ahab King of Israel, with this Denunciation and very awful Message.—“ God will neither send Rain nor Dew upon this Land, till I, his Prophet, shall return again.” Elijah confirmed his Prediction with an oath, and he then left the City, and went and took up his residence at the Brook Cherith, which ran through the valley leading down to the River Jordan, and here the Ravens are said to have brought him meat day by day; but it is more generally believed, the Inhabitants of a little Town, named Oreb, situated near this celebrated Brook; as the Hebrew word Orebim translated Ravens, might be interpreted the Orebims.

God here provided for his Prophet during the the first year of the Drought, but at this time, for want of a supply, the Brook dried up, and the Prophet was directed to go to Zarephath, which lay between the ancient Cities of Tyre and Sidon, twelve miles only from the former, he should there find a widow Woman who would feed him.

Elijah

Elijah immediately set out, and not far from the gates of the City, he met a Woman picking up sticks, it was in some way made known to the Prophet, that she was to be his provider; upon which intelligence Elijah goes up and speaks to her; pray will you fetch me a drink of water? The Woman went to draw it, but the Prophet called her back, and desired she would bring a piece of bread with her. The Woman upon this declared her poverty, indeed her whole stock of provision was one single handful of meal, and a small cruse of oil, and as he might see, she was picking up a few sticks to make a fire, and bake her little store for herself and her son, probably the last meal they should ever eat together, after that, she and the poor Child would surely both of them be starved to death. Elijah cheers his Hostess, hope better things (says he) go do as you intended, bake your little cake and bring me a piece of it, the Woman earnestly looking at him, he told her, "The stock of meal, "nor the cruse of oil would neither of them be "consumed, till God should graciously send rain "upon the earth, and the Famine be no more." The Woman went away, her Faith silences all her objections, she did as she was ordered, and the barrel of meal wasted not, and the cruse of oil did not fail. She rapturously enjoyed the blessings the Prophet had foretold, a most plentiful
supply

supply, and for two years till the Drought and the Famine were over.

Thus God provided again for his Prophet, paid his widowed Hostess for his board, and the Mother and the Son were both of them blessed with his good company and instructions. Whenever she went to her cruse and her barrel, how pleasingly told, The Finger of God is here.

Some time after this the Widow experiences the benefit of another Miracle wrought in her favour. Her only child, her Son grew sick, and after a few days he died; the Mother wept aloud, she beat her breast, she tore her hair, expressing the liveliest sorrow and distraction. God was punishing her for her sins, the Prophet, that good Man, had discovered her wickedness, and he had told it. Elijah comes to his Hostess, and comforts her, be of good cheer, where is your Son? Although he were even dead, he would bring him back to life again. Elijah was shewn the chamber, and the dead youth; the Prophet laid himself down upon the Corpse, and kept breathing into its mouth, at the same time addressing his God in an earnest and very fervent prayer.

“ Elijah’s piety and devout supplications prevail, the Child breathes, the Youth revives, he lives again, and the Prophet gives him up
“ to

“ to his Mother in health. Overjoyed, in a
 “ trance of affectionate feelings, a burst of ten-
 “ derness and surprise overpowers the poor
 “ Widow, her doubts are removed, her Faith
 “ revives; indeed thou art a Man of God, and
 “ the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.”

It was in the third year of the famine, when
 the Prophet returned to Samaria and shewed
 himself to good Obadiah. Obadiah was Over-
 seer, and held the first office in all the King's
 Household. This good man was searching
 every where for a little food and a drink of
 water to refresh the few poor cattle which as
 yet survived the famine. The King, and he,
 had just parted, and Ahab said, do you Obadiah
 go one way, I myself will go another, peradven-
 ture we may find grass enough to save the horses
 and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.
 Obadiah had so distinguished himself for his
 piety and zeal for God and his Prophets, as to
 have risked his life, by concealing from the
 fury of the angry Queen a hundred of the
 young Prophets by fifties in a cave, and Oba-
 diah went every day himself to feed them on
 bread and water.

While the King and his Overseer thus (as it
 were) divided the land, and were searching
 throughout

throughout, Elijah met Obadiah, and he fell prostrate on the ground, expressive of his reverence and his joy, art thou not my Lord Elijah? and the Prophet desired Obadiah to introduce him to the King; "go tell thy Lord, behold "Elijah is here;" Obadiah over anxious for the Prophet's safety as well as his own, pleads with him the danger which would attend his compliance; Ahab will order you into his presence, and when I come to fetch you, the spirit of your God, will carry you whither I know not, and Ahab will slay me, when I cannot find you; my life (my Lord) has not passed altogether useless, was it not told my Lord, I concealed a hundred men, by fifty in a cave, and fed them day by day myself, it would be sad for them should Ahab slay thy servant; from my youth, I thy servant, fear the Lord always; Elijah resolutely persisted, this very day (he told him) he would shew himself to the King, as the Lord liveth, replied Obadiah, there is no Nation or Kingdom whither my Lord hath not sent to seek thee, and bring thee back to revoke the Sentence, and even took an oath of that Kingdom and Nation that they found thee not. No remonstrance availed. Obadiah was most reluctantly forced on the message. Ahab haughty and passionate, insultingly upbraided the Prophet, he was the cause of the famine, with

with a bitter sarcasm, the King asked Elijah art thou he that troubleth Israel? with dignity the Prophet answered him, he was himself the cause, Israels distresses arose from his own Impiety and Idolatry, from the Idol Gods he had set up, and the heathenish worship authorized and established throughout his Kingdom; seeing the King struck with his manner, the Prophet now expressly and condescendingly told him, "the Country " should have rain." The Famine hitherto had been exceeding sharp and the scarcity, both for man and beast so great, they were all of them on the point of perishing.

Notwithstanding the good news the Prophet brought, the contest presently began again, and the dispute between the King and Elijah ran high, Ahab grew warm, he accused, threatened, and upbraided the Prophet, upon which Elijah proposed a satisfactory method which should convince the King, and all his People who it was that troubleth Israel. The Prophet desired to have a meeting of the Priests and Worshipers of Baal in order to give his Majesty a public demonstration of their impotence and folly, at which contest and Trial Elijah asked the King himself to preside.

Four hundred and fifty Prophets and Priests of Baal were summoned by proclamation, and the Prophets of the Groves, her Majesty's Chaplains, which eat at the Queen's table, and a vast concourse of People all assembled upon Mount Carmel not far from the sea-shore. The Prophet addressed himself first to the People, and (he said) how long halt ye between two opinions, there can be but one Supreme Jehovah, if the Lord be God worship him, but if Baal then follow him. In the presence of their Sovereign the People kept a respectful silence, they sorely felt the effects of the famine and well knew Baal could not remove it. After a pause Elijah speaks again, I stand alone and speak the cause of God, but Baal's Prophets are four hundred and fifty, go order us now two Bullocks, they shall chuse one, cut it to pieces and lay it on wood, putting no fire under it. I will dress the other and lay my victim on wood, and put no fire under it. They shall call unto Baal, and I will call on the name of the Lord; now the God who answereth by fire, let him be God, and all the People answered, "it is well spoken."

Elijah turning to the Priests and Prophets of Baal directed them to make choice of one Bullock and dress it themselves first, for says he, ye
are

are many; call on your God, after you have placed it on the Altar and the wood, but put ye no fire underneath. From necessity they complied, after having prepared their Ox they begun their homage, they bowed and knelt, most earnestly, they prayed, implored, vowed—all the powers of art, enchantment and divination, were strenuously exerted, but in vain; no sacred fire blazed around their sacrifice; from morning to noon they were thus all fervent zeal and supplication, then they cut and flashed themselves with knives, and lances, (after their bloody mode of worship). Elijah placid and at ease, now began to ridicule them, and with the wittiest pleasantry, attempted to rectify their notions and false ideas of a God; Baal, illustrious in their eyes, a great personage of uncontrollable power, the Prophet by contrasting his limited sphere with the high ideas of omniscience and omnipotence, represents Baal an image impotent, and ridiculous. “Cry aloud, Baal is a great God, he is busy, or he will not hear, perhaps he is talking, or pursuing, on a journey, or a-sleep.

The Prophets own trial succeeded. Ahab King of Israel, a vast multitude of his People, all the Priests and Prophets of Baal witnesses.

Elijah slew his Ox, ordered the Priests to remove their oblation, and beckoned to all the People to draw near. The Prophet then took twelve large stones (the number of the twelve Tribes), and rears an Altar for himself, with a deep trench around it. He pours over it four pails of sea water, and after that four more, and filled the trench. Upon the Altar the Prophet piled his wood, and over all he laid his Ox. Elijah then put up a fervent and devout Prayer to God, humbly asking Him to vouchsafe to demonstrate his power before this People. A fire from Heaven alighted instantly on the Altar, blazing and consuming the Sacrifice, and it dried up all the water in the trench.

All Israel fell prostrate on the ground, reverentially worshipping the One only living and true God.

Elijah availed himself of this their serious disposition and devout homage, and with authority commanded them to put to death all the Priests and Prophets of Baal; inspired by what they saw, and the commands of the Prophet, they drove them down to the Brook Kidron, and every one of them were drowned or slain.

The King much mortified and chagrined, at what he saw, stood by and silently permitted it,
Immediately

Immediately afterwards Elijah walked up to Ahab, and spoke comfortably and encouraging to him, Go home (says he) to dinner, God will shortly send you rain.

The Prophet ascended the hill with his faithful servant, and he sat him down on the grass, go (he says) to his servant, climb that Rock, and look towards the Sea, and tell me when you see a cloud; the sky was quite clear and serene, the young man mounts up the Rock, time after time, and sees nothing, the seventh time he brings Elijah word, something he did see, but it was no bigger than a Man's head, on hearing this the Prophet instantly dispatched a hurrying message to Ahab, to haste home or he would be wet, the shower was just coming, and the King had only time to mount his Chariot and enter the Palace gates, before a sudden tempest poured down rapidly. Elijah, to shew his humility, respectfully ran before the King as far as the City Jezreel, but he would not go up to the Palace, as he meant to avoid the furious anger of the Queen. Outrageous and frantick for the loss of her Priests, the Queen was vowing revenge on the Prophet, he should die, he should die, and before to-morrow's dawn. Under this fore alarm and persecution, Elijah left Samaria, and he fled to a Desert not far from Beersheba,

a City on the frontiers of the Tribe of Judah, and under the Government of Jehosaphat. The Prophet over fatigued, and quite faint, here laid himself down under a Juniper tree, and he prayed to God that he might die, while the Prophet was lamenting and repining at his hunger, and at his many sore trials and troubles, he fell a-sleep, soon as he awoke, Elijah found that meat and drink had both been set by him, and the Prophet eat and drank and was refreshed, after which he proceeded on his journey, and came to the foot of Mount Sinai, the tremendous Mountain, held sacred by all the Nations around, where Moses, from the hand of God, so awfully received the Israelitish Laws. Elijah perceived a large Cave, probably the same where Moses had been hid, here the Prophet ventured to turn in, made it his place of residence, and sat down to indulge his melancholy. After he had lived here some time, one morning Elijah heard a voice distinctly calling him, and it asked why he had left the City? and why he hid himself there? The Prophet answered, on account of my slaying her Priests, the angry Queen is persecuting me, and endangering my life. The day following Elijah heard the voice accosting him again, and it ordered him out of the Cave, he should receive his instructions in

in the open air on the Mount, and stand before the Lord. The Prophet obeyed, and as soon as he was well got out of the Cave, he was awfully shook by an earthquake, his eyes were at the same time dazzled, and he was almost blinded with a burst of light, accompanied with a mighty rustling, suddenly the scene changed, and all was in a moment succeeded by a dead stillness, and a perfect calm (an operation of Nature very similar to a fiery Volcano). God hereby intimating he would work for Israel, not by visible exertions, might, or power, but by his secret influence silently acting on the mind. The voice was now distinctly heard again, and it spoke comfortably to the Prophet, who had wrapt his face in his mantle, and stood trembling, and almost senseless with horror; "Be not afraid; none of all your enemies shall overpower you. Go home, anoint Jehu, the Son of Nemshi, King over Israel. Hazael, of Damascus, King of Syria. Elifha, Son of Shaphat, of Abel-meholah, near the City of Abela, appoint him your Successor, a Prophet of the Most High God. As yet I have left me seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal," who will second your attempts, and declare against Idolatry.

Elijah made no delay, but set out on his journey back to Samaria, and as he passed
over

over the fields, he met with Elisha, in company with others at Plow, Elisha was driving (together with his servants) not far from the City twelve yoke of Oxen; Elijah as soon as he came near to him, threw his mantle over him, this was the simple mode of inauguration the Prophet adopted, and elected this wealthy farmer into his new office; Elisha instantly prophesied; he left his Plow and his Oxen, and followed Elijah, only first desired leave to call together his Parents, Relations, and Acquaintance and have one merry meeting, and take a farewell of them all. Elisha killed two of his oxen, he cut up, and cooked the flesh, divided his feast among his guests, and then went away with the Prophet, and they took up their abode not very far from Jezreel, the City where Ahab and his Court at that time resided. Naboth who possessed a large estate in this beautiful Valley, owned a Vineyard contiguous to the gardens of the Palace, it was almost in the King's grounds, and a most eligible spot for a kitchen garden. Ahab offered to make a purchase of it, or to give Naboth some other estate in exchange; Naboth was wealthy, it was his patrimonial estate, and in that Country it was esteemed very disgraceful to part with it, Naboth liked to eat himself of the fruit and produce of his own

own lands, and chose to improve it for his children, and honourably hand it down to posterity; upon these considerations he uncourteously refused the request of his Prince. Naboth's denial so thoroughly vexed and nettled Ahab, he would neither eat, nor drink, nor wash, nor dress himself, nor could he sleep; the King lay all day on the ground, sullen and sick from disappointment; the Queen struck with a conduct so strange, inquired what could be the cause? and she was now told, of the request, his Majesty had condescendingly made, and of Naboth's refusal; she goes immediately to the King, art thou a Sovereign over Israel? does it become the dignity of a King to sue to his subject? why not seize on the Vineyard by force, give yourself no more trouble about such a Trifle, rise up, attend to your health, eat and drink and dress yourself as usual, I will give thee the Vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite,

Jehsebel sat down and she wrote herself, and forwarded letters to the Nobles, Elders and Magistrates of Jezreel, and sealed them with the royal signet, commanding a Fast to be proclaimed, an assembly called, and the first seat in it, to be given to Naboth.

His person and his presence thus made sure of, the Court was directed to suborn false witnesses, and impeach Naboth of high treason and blasphemy; the punishment for which, was death and confiscation; the Judges were ordered therefore instantly to pass sentence on Naboth, and lead him out and stone him.

The Jezreelites dared not disobey the Queen, and they soon sent her word of the death of Naboth; " Naboth is stoned, and is dead." The Queen carries herself the news to Ahab, the King hastily arose and went directly to the Vineyard to take possession; the Prophet Elijah met Ahab on the spot, the King highly awed, says to him, " hast thou found me, O mine " Enemy? most solemnly the Prophet announced the sad destruction, the murder of Naboth would bring upon him; the Queen; upon his Sons; and all and every one of his Family. " The dogs should lick the blood of Ahab, and " on the self-same spot, where they had licked " the blood of Naboth; Jesebel his Queen " should be devoured by dogs; his posterity " utterly be cut off; those who died in the " fields, the fowls of the air should eat, those " who died in the City, the dogs. Thus all " should lie inglorious and unburied."

The

The Prophet Elijah was, some years after this, sent with an awful message to Ahaziah the Son of Ahab, the balustrades had given away, and he fell from the roof of his Palace into the Court yard below, the King was sorely bruised and in very great agony; in his anguish and distress, Ahaziah sent his servants to Baal-zebub the God of the Ekronites, to enquire if he should recover.

The Prophet Elijah was directed to go to meet the Messengers, order them back to the Palace, and give the King this awful answer to his enquiry. "Is it not because there is no God in Israel that thou sendest to the Idols of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from the bed on which thou liest, but shalt surely die."

The speedy return of the Messengers surprised Ahaziah, but when they had told him of the Person they had met, his being acquainted with the errand they were sent on, and the answer which he ordered them to deliver, the King was still more struck, and he instantly asked them, what sort of a Man was he? and they said a hairy Man, with a leathern girdle.

Ahaziah now knew him to be the Prophet, and said, send me a Captain and his band of fifty, let them go and bring this Man before me.

The Prophet had mounted up a high hill, a part of Mount Carmel, and sat himself down; here an Angel appeared and guarded Elijah. The Captain and his band of soldiers climbed up and approached him. He first sent him a message, commanding the Prophet down, and gave orders to his Men to surround him, resistance he told Elijah would avail him nothing, his Guard should carry him to the Palace; thus was he beset, and no chance of escape, and in case he surrendered, the Prophet lay wholly at the mercy of the King.

Elijah (appealing to his own dignity and character) told the Officer, Fire from Heaven would consume both him and his band; and it was immediately afterwards, Fire did come down and burnt to ashes the Captain and all his men; an awful instance of God's power, who thus interposed and saved the life of his Prophet.

The fatal news is carried to the Palace, Ahab highly obstinate, though alarmed, dispatched another Captain, and his band of fifty. He with like menaces accosted Elijah, commanding him down, on the Prophet's appeal, Fire from Heaven destroyed in like manner this second Captain and his men. The King sent in haste a third Captain and his fifty. He, awfully intimidated

midated by the destruction, and the sad scene he witnessed, and himself being of a mild and sweet disposition, he fell on his knees before the Prophet, and besought him, saying, " O Man of God, I pray thee let my life, and the lives of these fifty thy servants be precious in thy fight." Elijah captivated with the modest and humble behaviour of this Officer, came down the hill with him, and went with his band to the Palace.

The Prophet being ushered in to the Royal presence with firmness and magnanimity, delivered his awful Commission to the King. " Since thou hast sent to Baal-zebub the God of Ekron, as if there had been no God in Israel, to enquire respecting your recovery, I, the Prophet of the Most High God, denounce death to thee. Thus the Prophet exhibited the dignity of his Office, and gave a fresh proof of his Faith and Courage.

The last message Elijah was sent to deliver was to Jehoram, and the Prophet wrote him a letter to inform him, that on account of his impiety, abominations and Idolatry, God would inflict an awful and very terrible judgment both on King and People, he then relates to him the death of the Queen and his Children, he himself should but a very short time survive them;

Elijah

Elijah goes on to particularize the disease the King should suffer under, and its fatal issue, tormenting pains in his bowels, a bloody flux, which would end in a rupture, his bowels would so burst out, that he himself should see them.

It was soon after this, his last, and sad prediction, Elijah was taken from the sight of men, no one could ever say the Prophet died.

Elijah went to Gilgal, his faithful Elisha following him, from thence to Bethel, and from thence to Jericho, and from Jericho to the River Jordan; at the two first places Elijah would very fain have left Elisha, his faithful servant would not be shaken off, no entreaties, no commands prevail; when they came to the banks of the River, Elisha waved his mantle over the water, and it formed a wall like glass on either hand, to the right and to the left, (a Miracle designed to grace the last day of the Prophet's abode on earth). The waters thus divided, the Prophets both passed over dry shod.

Elijah on the other side, and near the banks of Jordan; enquired what he should do for his faithful servant, and Elisha wisely, and with pious zeal, asked of him "A double portion of his Spirit." Elijah said, it was indeed a difficult request,

request, nevertheless if he should see him, after he was first parted from him, it would be granted, hereby keeping his attention fixed on this wonderful Scene.

Thus it was he comforted his faithful and very affectionate Servant, and while they were yet talking and thus prepared for parting—a bright Cloud, resembling a Chariot of Fire and Fiery Horses, is said to have come between them, separating them the one from the other.

Elijah ascended up into Heaven in a whirlwind.



E S S A Y XXIV.

O N T H E

L I F E

O F

E L I S H A.

AT the exprefs appointment of God, Elifha, the Son of Shaphat, a wealthy Farmer of Abel-Meholah, near the City of Abela, was initiated into his high Prophetic Office, by the Prophet Elijah, and chofen his Succellor.

In his Father's farm, Elifha, together with the Husbandmen, was driving twelve plows, with
twelve

twelve several yoke of Oxen, and he himself had the management of the last plow, when the Prophet Elijah, in his journey from Mount Sinai to Samaria, went up to him in the field, and without any preamble there threw his mantle over him. This was the ceremony of inauguration adopted by the Prophet. Elisha experienced a wonderful change, and instantly began prophesying. He asked leave of Elijah to give a parting kiss to his Father and Mother, and take an affectionate farewell of his Acquaintance, and the Prophet told him, all that I have done, is by instigation from a higher Power, and no hindrance to a prudent regard to your Relations; upon which, Elisha (according to the custom of the times) slew two of his Oxen, cooked the flesh, made a Feast, and divided it among his Family and the Servants, and then readily left his Teem and his Parents, and family estate, and followed Elijah; ever after, he became his watchful Companion and faithful Servant.

Upon the translation of the Prophet Elijah, his constant attendant was by all the Sons of the Prophets immediately recognized as his Successor, and they said one to another, "The Spirit of Elijah does rest on the Prophet Elisha."

In token of lively sorrow, as soon as he could discern the ascent of Elijah in the air, Elisha rent his cloaths, and in a kind of extasy, kept crying out, " My Father, my Father, the Chariot " of Israel and the Horsemen thereof." An affectionate and most polite appeal. Your Counsels, Prayers, and Power with God, have done more for the defence of Israel, than their Chariots, Horsemen and warlike Prowess. Seeing the Mantle drop from Elijah as he rose, Elisha picked it up, and walked to the banks of Jordan, he waved it over the river, and in humble dependance enquired, where is the Lord God of Elijah? intimating that God is present. Although Elijah was gone—God was not. Elisha smote the waters, waving his Mantle over them, and they divided to the right hand and to the left, so that the Prophet walked over dry-shod. In order to strengthen Elisha's faith, God so ordered it, that with Elijah's Mantle, his Office and Spirit should rest on his Successor. The young Prophets here met Elisha, and gave a proof of an amiable humility, by paying him the same reverence they had always shewn Elijah. They began by presenting a petition to their new Master, behold (say they) there be here Fifty of thy servants, all strong men, we pray thee let us go seek Elijah, his Spirit only may be removed, his body left,

we

we would fain give it an honourable burial. Elijah told them it would be to no purpose. The Youths were so very pressing, their importunity got the better of the Prophet, modest and humble, he was quite ashamed to refuse, and he said, go. The Fifty young men sought diligently three days, and Elisha waited for them at the City of Jericho. On their return, he mildly said, Did I not say unto you, go not? A circumstance which promoted greater respect, and caused the wisdom of their new Master to be more noticed.

Before he reached Jericho, the news of the Prophets ascent had been rumoured in that City, and the inhabitants were told of the arrival of his Successor. The Heads and Elders assembled in a body, and submissively petitioned him to redress a grievance they had long laboured under. The water of their springs, and their brook was unwholesome, and their land barren and unfruitful. "The men of the City said, the situation is indeed pleasant, as my Lord seeth, but the water is naught and the ground barren." Elisha's first miracle was mercy, he uses a ceremonious form, which enhanced its notoriety, for he threw salt into the water, well known to add to its unpleasantness,

fantness, after which, he told them, " I have
 " healed your waters, there will be no more
 " death or barren land henceforwards." From
 Jericho the Prophet journeyed on towards Bethel, the City of Jacob's Vision, whence it got its name, but since well known for its impiety and idolatry and for being the City, in which Jeroboam had set up the golden calf in imitation of the Gods of Egypt. When Elisha came near Bethel, a number of Idolatrous youths ran out of the City, and set on by their parents, kept mocking and insulting the Prophet. " What come you here for? get ye up to
 " Heaven after your Master, go up thou Bald-
 " head go." We want none of your company nor your Prophecies. On this riot, and insult, Elisha turned away from Bethel, and passed by into another road which led to Mount Carmel, but still these wicked boys followed after him, riotous and noisy, reviling and mocking, upon which the Prophet turned back and looked at them, in the spirit of Prophecy Elisha denounced a curse he well knew was falling upon them, and then pursued his journey towards Carmel; presently, " two
 " She Bears rushed out from a neighbouring
 " wood and devoured two and forty of them." The inhabitants of Bethel all Idolaters, were
 vexed

vexed to have a college of young Prophets among them, they had a settled averſion to all the ſtudents, and therefore ſent out theſe Idolatrous youths to inſult their new maſter.

At Mount Carmel, Eliſha took up his abode at the School, and viſited the Sons of the Prophets, on his initiation he was deſirous of retirement, to conſider of his new duties and employ, and more uninterruptedly hold converſe with his God. After ſome time the Prophet ſet out from hence, and returned back to Samaria, and ſoon entered on a life of buſineſs and more active zeal.

In his prophetic office Eliſha's firſt call was highly beneficial to his Countrymen. Jehoram King of Iſrael, in alliance with the two Kings of Judah and Edom, had marched a numerous and powerful Army againſt Moab; in order to fall on the rear of the Moabites, this vaſt Hoſt made a wide circuit through the wilderneſs of Edom, it took them up no leſs than ſeven days, all this while travelling acroſs this dry and ſandy deſert, the troops were at length quite faint exhausted and dying for want of water. In this extremity, perishing and gasping,

ing, Jehoram passionately said, the Lord hath called us three Kings together, to deliver us an easy prey to Moab. But Jehosaphat, King of Judah, enquired for a Prophet of the Lord, Jehoram's servant told him, Elisha Son of Shaphat, he was here, and the King replied, Elisha is a true Prophet. Upon this the three Kings immediately set out and walked down to the Prophet's tent, hoping by their condescension and the honour they did him, more effectually to engage his assistance. On their arrival at the tent, Elisha called out loudly to Jehoram, "what have I to do with thee? go get thee to the calves thy Father Worshipped, or to Baal the God of thy Mother;" the King answered him, you can have no respect for me, but pity this innocent King of Edom and good Jehosaphat, involved in a like misery and danger with myself. Elisha called for a musical instrument and composed his mind, somewhat ruffled by their presence and the calamity, after which he told them, "ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, but go ye, make this valley full of ditches, all of them shall be filled with water, and ye shall drink, and your cattle, and your beasts; and moreover it is not the only proof ye shall witness of the power and goodness of God, now shewn you on account of Jehosaphat, whose virtue and piety
I revere,

I revere, it is indeed comparatively a light thing, for God will also deliver the Moabites into your hands, and ye shall smite every fenced City, and every choice City, and fell every goodly Tree."

The three Kings had only entertained hopes of defending themselves, and retiring back from their Enemies, the Prophet instantly procured a land flood (probably from the rocks) which soon plentifully supplied both men and beasts and refreshed them all; the Moabites not in the least dreaming of water, the next morning by the unusual reflection of the Sun looking red on the water, thought of nothing but blood, and that the three Kings must have quarrelled and cut one another to pieces, and they said, "now Moab to the spoil," rashly without any martial order they advanced even to the Camp of Israel, where they were all slaughtered and the Army totally destroyed, the King of Moab hastily fled, and he was almost the only one who got back to his Capital.

This Heathenish Prince, furious and frantic, on the City Wall publicly exhibited the most barbarous and horrid of all Scenes, the murderous burnt-offering of his own Son, the heir to
the

the Crown of Moab, to appease (as he impiously thought) the anger of Chemosh his God.

In the City of Samaria the Prophet was presented with a humble petition from a very poor Widow, her Husband she said was the Son of a Prophet, he was lately dead, and had left her in great distress; he died insolvent; the creditors were already in her house; they had arrested her two Sons and were carrying them off for slaves (according to the laws and custom of the Country); the affectionate Mother tore her hair and wept aloud; Elisha asked her what she might have left, and she answered him, only a pot of oil. Go says the Prophet to all your neighbours, borrow of them every vessel and empty cask you can procure, place them in your own house, and shut yourself up with your two Sons alone, then take your little store of oil, and begin pouring into that cask which stands first; the poor Widow implicitly obeyed, and the oil so wonderfully increased as to fill to the brim, all the vessels and casks she had been able to borrow.

Overflowing with tears of joy, she instantly sought out her Benefactor, and told him all her success. The Prophet now directed her to go and sell as much of her oil, as would pay all
her

her late husband's debts, and support herself and her family on the remainder.

See the poor Widow relieved from her distress, her two Sons rescued from bondage, her husband's Creditors fully paid, and a sweet independence allotted her for life.

Elisba travelled next to the City of Shunem, in the Tribe of Issachar, near Mount Carmel, and as oft as he passed that road, a Family of figure and fortune always hospitably entertained him, and as she saw him very often, the Mistress of the house took great notice of the sanctity of his life, the fervency of his devotion, and his zeal for the honour of his God; the noise and bustle of her great family she thought must surely interrupt the Meditations and Prayers of this good Man, and sometimes might even offend his delicacy. After she had thought much on the subject, she consulted with her husband, and proposed to him the building a little chamber on the wall, it would yet be within the premises, and she would furnish it (according to the simplicity of the times) with a bed and a stool, and a table and a candlestick, a little independence (she said) was always enjoyed, so she proposed to her husband the making him a present of it, that whenever he travelled the road, he might be

accommodated with his own, and turn in thither, the obligation would perhaps seem less, and a grateful disposition less hurt by accepting it.

This amiable friend had often so hospitably received the Prophet, and had just now settled a little home upon him; he sends Gehazi his servant to enquire how he should make her some return; the good man felt the debt of kindness irksome; would she be spoken for to the King? or to the Captain of the Host? His amiable Hostess had set bounds to her desires, sweetly contented, she sent him word, she dwelt in love and peace amongst her own People; her station in her neighbourhood equalled all her wishes. Moderation so unaffected while it was noticed by the Prophet, encreased his difficulty, and he asks Gehazi, how shall I repay this Woman's kindness? Gehazi tells him, her Husband is old, it would be a great joy, indeed, to her, to be a Mother. At the very next meeting, the Prophet acquaints his Hostess, she should have a Son. The Woman did not know how to believe even so good a Man; but she found soon after the truth of the Prophets information. She bore a Son, the Child grew up and delighted her heart; as it was one day in the fields with its Father following the reapers, the Child cried, my head,
my

my head, it grew suddenly sick, the fond Father most tenderly ordered it home, and it died soon after, at noon, in its Mother's arms. The distracted Parent, overwhelmed with despair, hastens with her dead Son up to the Prophet's Chamber, and there laid it down upon the bed, she then asked of her Husband to send her an Ass and a driver, they both seat themselves upon it, and she says, drive you on, and go forward, slack not thy riding, unless I bid thee, she made all the speed she could to Carmel, where Elisha dwelt, the Prophet saw her coming, while she was afar off he suspected the cause, and hastily sends his servant to enquire, is all well with thee? is all well with thy Husband? is all well with the Child? the Woman makes no stop, hastens on to the hill, a most earnest and humble suppliant, she caught the Prophet and held him by the feet—Gehazi thrust her away—but the Man of God said, let her alone, her soul is sore vexed, and the Lord hath hid it from me. The Woman was soon able to speak, and she pleads with the Prophet; did I desire a Son of my Lord? He was freely promised me; surely thou art concerned to restore me my dead Son, a Son, by your Prayers to God, you so kindly procured me. Elisha would now fain have hurried away Gehazi his servant, and he gave him his own

Staff, and was directing him to lay it on the face of the Child, but the wailings, and entreaties, and distraction of the Mother prevail on the Prophet, "I will never leave thee till thou goest with me." The Prophet hastes away himself, Gehazi his servant ran forward with his Staff, and passed on before them, and laid the Staff on the face of the Child, but as there was no appearance of life, he ran back and told him, the Child was not awaked. Elisha now entered the room, and he shut the door upon them twain, and he fell down upon the dead Child, and he put his mouth upon his mouth, and then, his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and behold the Child waxed warm, the Prophet's fervent Prayers at length were heard, the breath returns, the Child sneezes, it opens its eyes, it revives, and the Prophet says to Gehazi, go call this Shunamite—the Mother comes—she scarcely could believe what she saw, she fell prostrate on the ground, rapturously yet reverentially worshipping that Divine Power, which had wrought so joyous a Miracle in her family.

Elisha's habitation was principally at Mount Carmel, he here established a School, and taught himself a great number of young Students, training them up for young Prophets, the building

was called the College, and Elisha boarded them all himself, as well as presided over their education. At the City of Gilgal there was another College of the Prophets; and Elisha, as he was now at Shunem, travelled on to Gilgal, the Prophet had heard there was a dearth in that City, and he was anxious for the safety and prosperity of the College, Elisha went purposely to comfort and encourage the young Prophets, to confirm them in their religious principles and daily duties.

The morning after his arrival (he says), set on the Pottage, and he sent Gehazi to gather herbs for it in the fields, among the wholesome herbs were plucked some leaves of the Coloquintida, a horrid bitter and poisonous plant, and they were boiled among the rest in the Pottage. The Students were all struck with the bitter taste, and presently were all sick and vomiting, and they said to Elisha—O! thou Man of God, there is death in the Pot, Elisha asked for a little meal, and sprinkled it into the dish, after which it became wholesome and palatable, and they all eat of it very heartily.

Another miracle in the eating way is recorded of the Prophet, during his visit at the College; he is said to have fed a hundred persons, with
only

only twenty small loaves of barley bread, and they all had enough and to spare.

Soon after Elifha's return to Carmel, a Syrian General, the highly celebrated Naaman, Commander in Chief of the Armies of Syria, being afflicted with a leprosy, he obtained letters of recommendation from the King, his Master, to Jehoram King of Israel, requesting his permission, to apply to the Prophet Elifha for assistance and a cure. Naaman set out with a pompous retinue, a train of carriages, with noble and magnificent presents on his journey to Samaria; and he took with him ten talents of silver, and ten thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment, to defray the charges of his journey, and for presents to the Prophet and officers of the Court of Israel; as soon as he had entered the City, Naaman forwarded to the Palace, his petition and his letters of recommendation from the King of Syria to Jehoram.

The King misunderstood the message, thought this was only a pretence, the Syrians were waging war with him, in his surprize he cries out, " am I a God to kill or make alive, that thou " sendest hither a leper, so inveterate a malady."

The

The lepers then were covered all over with foul scurf, their flesh shrivelled, their joints distorted, most horrid, offensive, and loathsome, to cure a leprosy was next to raising the dead; the poor General, a miserable and shocking spectacle, had with difficulty travelled a long journey from Damascus, and the news of his arrival was soon carried to Mount Carmel, upon which Elisha wrote a letter to Jehoram, desiring the King to send the Syrian leper to Carmel, he should soon be made to know, there was a God in Israel.

Naaman with all his stately retinue drove on to Carmel, and his carriage stopt at the Prophet's door; Elisha sent his servant to the carriage and directed Naaman to the water side, there to alight, and bathe himself, dipping seven times in the River Jordan, after which his flesh would be renewed, and his leprosy cured. The Syrian Lord expecting a ceremonious reception, and all the formalities of a cure, replied in wrath, are not Abana and Parphar, Rivers of Damascus, purer far, than all the waters of Israel? Naaman drove off in a rage, but as soon as he became calmer, his servants respectfully remind him of the great ease with which the Prophet's directions could be complied with,

“ if

“ if (say they) thou hadst been bidden to do
 “ some great thing, wouldst thou not have done
 “ it? how much rather then, when he saith to
 “ thee wash and be clean.” As he passed on
 Naaman reasoned the point with himself, he
 went down to the River, and he dipped him-
 self seven times, and his flesh came again as
 fresh as a young child.

Amazed at what he saw, and overjoyed at
 his cure, Naaman mounted his chariot, drove
 on to Samaria and on to Carmel, he alights at
 the Prophet's door, and there profoundly reve-
 rences the God of Israel, the most high God of
 all the earth, here he unloads all his presents
 and lays them before the Prophet; Elifha ho-
 nourably refuses them all, and would not ac-
 cept a reward. With the most humble cour-
 tesy, Naaman, a Novice and a Heathen, ad-
 dresses the Prophet, and he says “ thy ser-
 “ vant will henceforth sacrifice to no God but
 “ thine; give unto thy servant two mules
 “ burthen of earth, to raise an Altar more
 “ holy and acceptable to him; and now I
 “ pray thee pardon thy servant; when my
 Master, leaning on me, pays his homage and
 worshippeth Rimmon, and I bow myself in the
 house of Rimmon, pray your God for this
 thing

thing to pardon thy servant; Elisha does not satisfy him about his doubt, go in peace, was all the farewell Salutation of the Prophet.

Gehazi stands wondering at the conduct and refusal of his Master, a princely General, a stranger, and from a foreign Court; so rich, and he had brought his presents from afar, he had received so very marvellous a cure, and his Master to receive none of his presents, Gehazi ran after the chariot and as soon as ever he came near, Naaman stopped and respectfully alighted and inquired his message, two young men, Gehazi said, were just come from Mount Ephraim on a visit to his Master; would he send by him a talent of silver and two changes of raiment, Naaman all gratitude obliged him to take two talents, together with the two changes of raiment, and Gehazi returned with them to Carmel; Elisha as soon as he saw Gehazi, asks from whence come you? and he answered, thy servant went no whither; Elisha replied, went not my heart with thee, when the man came down from his chariot to meet thee! I had good reasons for persisting to refuse all his gifts; was this a time to receive money and garments? such conduct disgraces my religion and me.

The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to thee, and to thy seed for ever.

“ And he went out of his Masters presence, a
“ Leper as white as snow.”

The number of the young Prophets encreasing and the comfortable subsistence and many blessings they enjoyed under so wise a master, and so good a man, induced them to petition him to enlarge their College, they were now become a large body, and Elisha their Tutor, accompanied by all his disciples set out together (such was the simplicity of the times) in order to fell timber, and they entered the Forest not very far from the banks of Jordan. The words of this petition, and still more the the Prophets answers, are wonderfully simple and concise. “ I pray thee let us go to Jordan, and take every man a beam, and make a place where we may dwell. Elisha says, go ye; but they said, be content and go with thy servants; Elisha answers, I will go; It was during this employment one of the students dropped the head of his ax in the River, greatly perplexed he told his trouble to Elisha, and behold, says he, it is a borrowed one; Elisha enquired for the place, and, the Jews say, he cut himself a handle, and dropped it in the
water

water. to which the head of the ax was miraculously joined. The young man saw his ax floating on the water, and so near the bank, by stooping down, he took it out with great ease.

Notwithstanding this late instance of respect and friendship from Jehoram, this highly noticed cure of Naaman, the Syrian Lord, the King his Master very soon lay an ambuscade against the life of Jehoram, and it had very near proved fatal to that Prince; "in such a place shall be my Camp, at this pass I will seize the Israelites and perhaps Jehoram." Elisha detected the plot, and by his wife and well timed communications prevented it; he wrote a letter to the King — "Beware thou pass not such a place, the Syrians are come down;" Jehoram sent his spies, and a guard with them to secure the place and passage; the Syrian King was sorely disappointed, he was in great wroth, and when he had called a council, he asks, who amongst us is for Israel? and his Nobles answered, my Lord, O King, none of us, thy servants are no spies, but Elisha the Prophet that is in Israel, telleth the King of Israel, the words that thou speakest in thy Bed-chamber; staggered at this report, and finding it confirmed, as all his

schemes were defeated by the Prophet, the Syrian Prince enquires where he was; and sends out his spies; Elisha at that time was visiting a little City near Sechem, called Dothan, and the King sent thither horses and chariots and a great Host, and they came by night and surrounded it; as soon as it was known, early in the morning, Elisha's servant ran to him, alas Master! what shall we do? behold horses and chariots and a mighty Host encompasseth the City; and Elisha answered, be of good cheer, they that are with us, are more than they that be with them; on the Prophet's prayer and request, the eyes of the young man his servant were opened, and he saw horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha, and behold they filled the mountain; the Syrian Troops had by this time entered Dothan, and at the Prophet's prayer, God smote them all with blindness, a sudden blaze of light confused all their senses, Elisha came himself and conducted them into the City of Samaria—When they were thus entrapped and all secure, the Prophet prays that their eyes might be opened and behold, they saw themselves in the midst of Samaria, surrounded with the Israelitish Army the King and his Guards, Jehoram now runs up to Elisha, and he cries out, my Father, my Father, shall I smite them? The Prophet answers no, wouldst thou in cold blood smite even

even those thou hast taken with thy sword or thy bow. Set meat and drink before them. The King ordered them a plentiful supply; and after they had eat and drank, he sent them all away.

This was an action of great piety and charity; doing good to enemies; an honour to their Religion, and highly prudential, as hereby the Syrians might return the kindness to the Israelitish Captives, and reverence a People so humane and thus invincibly protected.

An exploit so recent, and an example so merciful were soon forgot; Benhadad, King of Syria, boldly made his next attempt by open violence and the horrors of War. With all his forces, and in conjunction with his Allies, at the head of a numerous and most formidable army, he entered Samaria, ravaged the Country, and laid close siege to the Capital. The consequence of so close a blockade was very speedily felt, the rapidity and suddenness of the Enemy's arrival had prevented the necessary stores, a Famine ensued, an ass's head sold for near ten pounds, and a pint measure of peas for two shillings, every article of food was soon eat up. Jehoram, in deep despondency, was musing on his Ramparts, and walking round the City walls, to forward his necessary orders, and observe the motions of the
Enemy,

Enemy, and behold, a distracted Woman, all wildness, threw herself prostrate at his feet, my Lord, O! King—justice—I pray you justice on this Woman, she with-holds my due, and I am starving, “Give (she said) *thy* Son, and let us “eat him to-day, and we will dress and eat *my* “Son to-morrow.” I boiled my Child, and we did eat him; the next day when I looked for her’s, behold she has eat him alone, or saves his life. Jehoram sighed bitterly, and expressed the liveliest sorrow, he rent his cloaths, and the rents shewed the sackcloth, the deep mourning, wherewith he had clad himself. The King’s passion vented itself first on Elisha. “God do so, and more “also to me, if the head of Elisha, Son Shaphat “stand on him this day,” and the King instantly dispatched one of his Guard in order to murder him. Elisha sat reading his Lectures at home, and the Elders, his Friends and his Students sat with him. Ere the Messenger arrived, shut, shut the door, says the Prophet, and hold it fast, see how this Son of a Murderer has sent to take off my head? is not the sound of his Master’s feet behind him? while he yet talked, the Messenger and the King rushed in upon them. This judgment (says Jehoram) is from God—He hath inflicted it—He will not remove it—Women are eating up their children—Why bidst thou me wait

wait on God for help? I am weary of waiting, why wait longer? The Prophet soon convinced him of *his* Innocence, and forced from the angry King a tacit acknowledgment, it was the rod of the Almighty on account of his own Impiety and Idolatry.

After which Elisha comforts Jehoram, and tells him, so large a supply of provision would be brought into the City, even as soon as to-morrow, that a bushel of fine flour would be sold for five-pence, and two bushels of barley at the same price, at the Gate of Samaria.

That very night, struck with horror, and a dreadful panic, the Syrians thought they heard the noise of Horses, rattling of Chariots, and a mighty Host, they fled in the utmost terror and distraction, and they left all their Provision and Baggage, even many of their Horses and Asses, and much Cattle, the very roads were strewn with cups and spoons and garments they had dropped. The very next morning so great was the plenty, and so immense the spoil, a bushel of fine flour and two bushels of barley were sold for a shekel,* at the High Gate, the publick Market of Samaria.

It

* Five-pence.

It was during this hurry and confusion that a noble Lord of Samaria, a favourite of the King's, who had been appointed Overseer of the Gate, was trod to death by the Populace, he had discredited the Prophet's assertion, and sarcastically told him, "That might be, if the Lord would make Windows in Heaven." Elisha replied, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not taste thereof.

The Prophet had now one more opportunity of serving his amiable Hostess the Shunamite. Elisha had given her timely notice of the Famine, and on the Prophet's advice and information, she left the Country, retired into the land of the Philistines where there was plenty, and avoided all the distress. She and her family had now been absent seven years, and when she returned, her estates had all been seized, they were disposed of, and in the possession of strangers. The Shunamites represented the case, legally laid her claim; but no arguments she could use availed, the present occupier had made the purchase, and would retain possession. Upon which she came up to Court, and made her appeal to the Throne.

At the time she obtained an audience, and just as she was conducted into the presence Chamber, Gehazi was relating to the King the
Miracles

Miracles and very extraordinary history of his Master, and while he was telling the most astonishing one, his restoring a dead body to life, the Shunamitels caught his eye, my Lord, O King, says Gehazi, " This is the Woman—this is the " Son." Upon which the King enquired of the Woman herself, and asked her to tell her own story. A kind providence and very seasonable concurrence of events, for the King upon this, commanded all her estates to be restored to her, and the whole profits which had been received from the time she first left Shunem, and he appointed an officer to attend her, and see that they were fully paid back to her and her Son.

Elisha from hence took a journey to Damascus, and he there foretold Benhadad's death and Hazael's accession to the Throne of Syria.

The King was sick, and he heard of the Prophet's arrival at Damascus, well knowing his character and the signal miracles he had performed, he sends Hazael, his servant, with a most magnificent present, in order to purchase his favour and notice, ten Camels laden with the best riches of all his treasury. Hazael met Elisha, and he stood before him, and he bowed—
 " Thy Son Benhadad, King of Syria, sent me
 " to thee, and he said, shall I recover from
 VOL. II. O o " my

“ my disease ?” Elisha told him the malady was very usually cured, but the Lord had shewed him, that the King would surely die. The Prophet looked so very steadily on Hazael, it put him quite out of countenance, Elisha’s eyes at this instant ran down with tears, Hazael submissively and very respectfully enquired the cause of the Prophet’s grief, and he now tells him, I am reflecting on the evil thou wilt bring on Israel; its strong Holds thou wilt set on fire, its young Men thou wilt slay with the sword, the children shalt thou dash to pieces, and the Women with child shalt thou rip up; Hazael says, is thy servant a dog? and he pleaded his great meaness, the impossibility of a person in his station, to acquire even the power of acting with such inhumanity. The Prophet now adds, but God hath shewed me thou wilt be King over Syria.

Hazael’s ambition took fire; he returned back to his Master, and told him the Prophet had foretold his recovery; in order to prevent it, Hazael dipped a coarse cloth in water, and he pretended to be cooling a profuse heat, but he held it on his mouth long enough to suffocate him; after which, Hazael seized the Crown, and having in his interest both the People and the Army, he ascended the Throne of Ben-hadad.

Elisha

Elisha on his return to Carmel, directed one of the young Prophets to gird up his loins for expedition, and take a horn of oil, and haste away to Ramoth-Gilead; at this time the Kings of Israel and Judah were both absent, and Jehu was left in charge as Commander in Chief.

The young man was ordered to enquire for one of the name of Jehu, the Son of Jehosophat and Grandson of Nemshi, to retire with him alone into an inner chamber and there anoint him King over Israel; the Officers were all sitting in council together when he arrived at Ramoth-Gilead, and the young Prophet presents himself before them; I have an errand for thee O Captain, and Jehu said, unto which of us? and he answered, unto thee O Captain, and he arose and went into a back chamber in the house, and the young man took out his horn, poured the oil on his head, and said, I have anointed thee King over the People of the Lord, even over Israel.

The young Prophet then informed Jehu, God, by his Prophet, had commanded him to destroy the King; Jesebel, his Mother, Queen Dowager of Israel and extinguish root and branch of the family of Ahab. With wonderful

O o 2

courage

courage and dispatch, this Intrepid Hero executed the orders given him, the awful Sentence denounced by the Prophet on all the blood Royal of Israel.

This highly revered and good Man had now lived to see the completion of all he had foretold to Hazael, before he was King of Syria, literally fulfilled in the reign of Jehoahaz. In the beginning of the reign of Joas, soon after his accession, Elisha quite feeble, full of years, and now approaching his end, the young Prince respectfully pays him a visit, and on seeing him so helpless, the very visible and evident approaches of the death of so great a Prophet, and so holy and good a Man, tenderly affected him, and the King fell into a flood of tears, and said to him, " O! my Father, my Father, the Chariot of Israel and the Horsemen thereof," reminding him of Elijah's ascension, and his own words, at parting. The Prophet warmly felt the King's kindness, and with a highly pleasing courtesy, names to him the successes of his future Wars with Syria; he should engage them in three pitched battles, and come off Conqueror in them all.

The Prophet addresses the young Prince by action. Take bow and arrows, and he bids him shoot; after which, he tells him, thou shalt smite
the

the Syrians an Aphek, till thou hast consumed them. This was the *first* sign; and it respected his victories over Syria; and, the *second*, the number of those victories. Again the Prophet says. take the arrows and smite upon the ground; the King smote thrice, and then stopped. At this Elisha was wroth, thou shouldst (says he) have smitten five, or six times, then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it—whereas now thou wilt smite Syria only thrice; for God had signified to the Prophet, that the number of victories would correspond with the number of the King's strokes. The Prophet therefore anxious for his success, and Israel's glory, passionately laments he did not go on shooting, and by his repeated victories weaken, consume, and utterly destroy the Syrians.

It was during this War with Syria the good old Prophet died, and he had been buried near twelve months, when some Israelites, who were carrying a corpse in order to inter it, fell in with a band of Moabitish robbers, and as they were near the tomb of Elisha, they deposited the body within it, and fled away for their lives, upon touching the bones of the Prophet, the corpse was reanimated, it revived and stood up on its feet; of this Man, whose name was Salum, the Jews affirm, that he escaped from the tomb, lived
many

many years afterwards, and begat sons and daughters. Amidst the sad calamities of Israel, now challenged by Judah, and ravaged by Syria and Moab; but especially to Elisha's followers, a Miracle like this must have yielded them some present comfort, and afforded them a lively hope of an eternal life, whereof this was a manifest pledge.

They would reflect on God's former mercies and interposition, that he had not utterly forsaken Israel, and the goodness they now saw displayed to an individual, might exert itself in their national restoration and happiness.

In the character of this truly venerable and good Man in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, there seems a reference and confirmation given to the credit of this very wonderful Story.

“ Elisha was filled with the Spirit of Elijah.
 “ While he lived he was not over-awed by
 “ any Prince, neither could any ever bring
 “ him under subjection; no word could over-
 “ come him; and after his death, he prophesied,”

E S S A Y XXV.

ON THE
BOOKS OF THE PROPHECIES,
OF
I S A I A H.

TH E meaning of the Hebrew word, *Isaiah*, is highly descriptive of the Prophets Character.

“ The Salvation of Jehovah.”

Isaiah, was the Son of *Amoz*, the Prophet whom God had before sent to the Israelites with denunciations, and awful threats, on account of their base Ingratitude, and Idolatry.

Amoz,

3194. 810. Before Christ.

Amoz was of the blood royal, and Brother to Uzziah, King of Judah.

Isaiah, his Son, was the first of the Four Greater Prophets and distinguished by the title of a Prince among them. Thus born a Prophet, Isaiah was noticed very early in life for his piety, courage, and manly eloquence.

He wrote, himself his own Prophecies and of almost all of them, posterity were able soon to form their own opinion, for in less than a century, the events he foretold, were very many of them fulfilled or fulfilling. Isaiah's intelligences and directions were usually conveyed to him in visions and he was so correct and clear, in all the predictions he made, as never once to have erred.

His stile is distinguished by its magnificence and sweetness, the lively beauty and aptness of its figures, wonderfully striking and animated, the sublimest strains of poetry, flowing with inimitable elegance, loftiness and Majesty.

The general division of the book is into five parts.

The

The first ends at the thirteenth Chapter, and contains five distinct addressees to his Countrymen. In some he severely reproveth them, in others by the kindest promises he passionately exhorts and encourages them, “ a Remnant shall be saved; it shall return; as an elm, or an oak retains the substance when the leaves are gone, so the Holy Seed shall be the substance.”

The first verse concisely gives his genealogy, and the names of the Kings under whose reigns he prophesied, and they successively flourished, between three thousand one hundred and ninety-four, and the year of the World, three thousand three hundred and five. The highly eloquent invocation in the second verse, is a part of the song of Moses. “ Hear, O! Heavens, and give ear, O! Earth.” Isaiah hereby reminds the Jews of their first Lawgiver, and that he had predicted the times now present.

The four first Chapters contain the Prophecies in the reign of King Uzziah, and in the fifth is an admonitory song. A just and striking representation of a perverse, most ungrateful People, and an elegant and lively picture. I planted a Fence round my Vineyard (an extraordinary providence). I removed the stones

(vices and errors). I planted it with the choicest vines (Joshua, the Judges, David). I built a Tower (Jerusalem the Holy City) and made a wine press (Altars and Temple.) I looked for grapes, and behold it brought forth wild grapes (idolatries and immoralities). Be yourselves the Judges, what could I have done more for my Vineyard, that I have not done? Now will I take away the hedge and lay it waste, it shall not be pruned nor dug, the wall shall be broke and the Vineyard trodden down, I will command the clouds, and they shall rain no rain upon it.

Then quitting the parable, yet sweetly and poetically retaining the allusion, the Prophet strikingly concludes his Song.

“ The Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry” for vengeance.

The sixth Chapter contains the prophecies in the reign of Jotham, the Father of Ahaz, and the remainder of this book or division relates to King Ahaz himself.

Ahaz was the first Prince Isaiah was sent to. He was an Idolater, his sufferings and impiety
are

are largely expatiated on, in his reign, and the circumstance there told which occasioned the Prophet's first visit at his Court. Two formidable armies encompassed Jerusalem, and they threatened a total destruction to the Empire. All was consternation and despair. At this critical moment Isaiah entered the Palace, and in the exercise of his high prophetic office, he told the King, " the Armies of Israel and Syria, they both will try their strength in vain.

The Prophet's prediction was soon verified, both Kings finding all attempts fruitless, mortified and disappointed, marched with their Armies back to Damascus and Samaria.

Having already mentioned the glorious light, and joy and victory of the People of God, the Prophet, in the ninth Chapter, in a very striking and animated stile introduces the person of the Messiah who was so signally to display it, a Prophecy so pregnant of proof, and so unequivocal, the Jews have long and strenuously laboured to evade and obscure.

Full of certainty and encouragement Isaiah says, " unto us (Jews) a child is born, unto us " a Son is given; and the Government (over Church and People) shall be upon his shoulders (elegantly expressive of its weight and burden)

his name shall be called Wonderful, (the name of the Angel sent to Monoah and his Wife) Counsellor (declaring the council and decrees of Omnipotence, which he and his Apostles have revealed from the stores of wisdom and knowledge) the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father (of all believers and a World to come) the Prince of Peace (he gave his life a ransom to procure it).

In the tenth Chapter the Prophet denounces the judgments of God against the Assyrian Empire and its reigning Monarch, Senna-Cherib in particular. "O Assyrian the rod of mine anger" and Nineveh was in all its Pride and Glory, the Capital of a vast Empire, sixty miles in compass, its walls a hundred feet high, three chariots drove abreast upon them, and they were strengthened with fifteen hundred Towers. It was not very long after this Prophecy, the Monarchy was overthrown, and Nineveh destroyed.

The eleventh Chapter commences with another most encouraging Prophecy respecting the Messiah, under the sweetest figures, describing, throughout, that at that happy period, Men of fierce, cruel, and ungovernable dispositions, should, by the information then given them, and the grace and
good-

goodness of their long expected Saviour, become meek, humble, and tractable, conquering all their obstinacy—"the Wolf should dwell with the Lamb; the Leopard lie down with the Kid; the Lion with the Calf, and a little Child should lead them."

An elegant Hymn of Praise and Thanksgiving follows and finishes this first Book. A grateful and joyous Address to God for the many mercies which the Prophet had been so delighting his Countrymen by recounting.

The second Book includes the fourteen following Chapters, ending at the twenty-eighth, and contains eight different Addresses, describing the fates of Babylon, the Philistines, Moab, Syria, Tyre and Egypt, and these Denunciations end at the twenty-fifth, the subsequent three Chapters are Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving.

Isaiah lived during the declension of the kingdom of Judah, and foretold the downfall of the Jews and their captivity, together with the destruction of their enemies, Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre and Egypt; and great and mighty as they then were, all of them were plundered, destroyed, and laid waste, exactly in the manner the Prophet had predicted.

The thirteenth Chapter opens with the burden of Babylon, and the awful Prophecies respecting it; in a subsequent Chapter, renewing this same subject, the Prophet speaks of the destruction of Babylon, with such full assurance of the event, that he describes a thing future, as if it were already past.

“ Babylon is fallen, is fallen, its graven Images
“ broken down to the ground; Babylon is sud-
“ denly fallen and destroyed.”

At this very time, Babylon was the Haughty City, in all its grandeur and prosperity. “ The
“ glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chal-
“ dees;” the Golden City, abounding in wealth, sixty miles in circumference, and its walls three hundred and fifty feet high, and eighty-seven in thickness, its gates solid brass, in number one hundred, and each of them strongly guarded and watched by night and by day.

The fourteenth Chapter is Israel's Ode of Triumph, on the fall of Babylon, an animated, beautiful, and elegant composition, abounding with the severest strokes of Irony, and the sublimest strains of Poetry. All Hell is represented as moved, and the Ghosts of Tyrants dead, as rising up to meet the King of Babylon, with the keenest insult, and with Sovereign scorn they congratulate his arrival.

The

The fifteenth and sixteenth describe the sad and lamentable History of the Moabites. Moab was one of the incestuous Sons of Lot, that by the eldest daughter; the land they inhabited was situated in Arabia Petræa, a Nation notorious for Impiety, Incest, and Idolatry.

Syria and Israel are the subjects of the seventeenth, and God, by his Prophet, denounces heavy judgments and threatenings on them both. The nineteenth is the confusion and desolation of Egypt.

In the twenty-third Chapter is related the sad and miserable overthrow of Tyre, the most celebrated City in the World, for its Opulence, Trade and Navigation, the Seat of Commerce, the Centre of Riches. The highest boast of the Tyrians was their Antiquity, they then counted two thousand three hundred years from the building of their City and their celebrated Temple. The Mart of Nations, the crowning City, whose Merchants were Princes, whose Traffickers the honourable of the Earth.

Tyre was in this wealthy and flourishing state, when Isaiah prophesied its utter destruction, one hundred and twenty-five years before it happened. The Prophet foresaw, and expressly names the fatal causes of its ruin. The Luxury,
Pride,

Pride, and Impiety of its Inhabitants. The People who were prophesied of as the future Besiegers and Conquerors of this Imperial and Towering City, were the Chaldæans, then a scattered Tribe, a Nation in Infancy, dwelling only in Tents, and scattered about in Parties, wanderers in the Wilderness.

It is not unusual with the Prophet to paint in glowing colours the flourishing state of a City or Empire, in order more strikingly to contrast it, with its downfal and destruction.

The twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth Chapters commence with Songs of Praise in high sublimity. The twenty-seventh finishes the Prophet's second Book, and must have afforded his Countrymen the greatest consolation and delight.

" Sing ye, Sing ye (thus spirited and joyous).
 " A Vineyard of Red Wine (the choicest
 " Grape). I the Lord, do keep it, I will water
 " it every moment, I will keep it night and
 " day, nor Man nor Beast, nor Drought shall
 " spoil it.

" Fury is not in me", I am placable though
 displeased, " Let Israel take hold of my
 " Arm", restrain its force, be at peace and
 reconciled. " Israel shall make peace with me,
 he

“ he shall take root”, be firmly settled, not tossed hither and thither. “ My Vineyard shall blossom and bud. Israel’s posterity replenish the Earth. My Vineyard fill the Earth with fruit.”

The third Division begins with a severe Re-proof and Woe to Israel, under the name of Ephraim, Samaria the Capital being in that tribe, and the Prophet emphatically calls that haughty and insolent Kingdom, “ the Crown of Pride.” From hence, to the thirty-second Chapter, is an awful and most tremendous Woe to Jerusalem under the title of Ariel, which means the Lion of God, a Denunciation picturesque and horrible, uttered at a time when Jerusalem was formidable and glorious.

Hezekiah was then the reigning Prince over Judah, that good King greatly revered the Prophet Isaiah, he applied to him as a Friend and a Counsellor on all occasions. During the reign of Hezekiah, Jerusalem was besieged, an amazing Host, a vast multitude of Assyrians encompassed the City, the Army were already at her Gates ; they had dug a deep trench all around her, in order to prevent access of either Men or Provision, and all possibility of escape.

An Ethiopian Army sent for her relief were all cut to pieces, not one was left to bury the slain.

The Haughty Monarch, Senna-Cherib, in the hour of victory, just before his battering Rams were effecting a general storm, insultingly issued out his last orders for surrender; at this moment of despair, under the sufferings of Famine, Pestilence and Distraction within, and the horrors of War without, Isaiah in prophetic triumph entered the Palace.

“ Thus saith the Lord, I will put my Hook into
“ his Nose (even thine enemies) and my Bridle
“ into his Mouth, and I will turn him back by
“ the way in which he came.”

In that very night, preceeding a general storm, the Angel of the Lord went out, and by a pestilence smote in the Camp of the Assyrians, one hundred fourscore and five thousand.

At break of day, Senna-Cherib seeing the dead bodies filling the tents and covering all the Plain, marched hastily back to Nineveh his Capital, and not long after, while worshipping in the Temple of his God, Senna-Cherib was murdered by his Sons.

Isaiah

Isaiah had prophesied of his death, and the awful manner of it, together with many threatenings and denunciations respecting his Empire.

This Siege—this very signal and providential deliverance are the subjects of the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh Chapters. Another visit of the Prophets to King Hezekiah is recorded in the thirty-eighth.

Hezekiah was sick, Isaiah's awful message was, set your affairs in order, make your will, settle your Kingdom. God hath told me you will surely die. Hezekiah's tears; his penitential sorrow, and his prayers obtained for him a reprieve of fifteen years, the Prophet had taken his leave, but he was ordered to return to the Palace, and give the King this instant answer and consolation, the reward of his tears and his prayer.

Hezekiah, overjoyed, received now a very extraordinary proof of Isaiah's prophetic knowledge and power of working miracles.

Chuse you (says the Prophet) whether the shadow on the steps, or dial of the Palace should go ten degrees forward, or retire ten degrees back. Hezekiah preferred the latter, as the most signal and by far the most likely to be noticed.

The Chaldeans, great astronomers, were astonished at the surprizing change they had witnessed, being told of the King's recovery, Balad King of Babylon forwarded Ambassadors with magnificent presents to Jerusalem, Hezekiah courteously received them, ordered them to be splendidly entertained, and recommended these foreign Ministers to the notice of his Nobles, shewed them his treasures, his armory, his jewels and the grandeur of his Palaces, after which they requested an audience, took a respectful leave of his Majesty, and carried back a reciprocal mark of friendship, suitable presents to the King of Babylon. Isaiah enquired of Hezekiah who those men were, and from whence they came, the King told him, they came from Babylon, they had brought him a friendly and polite congratulation from Balad, being Foreigners and Strangers, he had shewn them his riches, his store of arms and his Palaces; the Prophet replied, those very riches shall all be carried to Babylon, your Sons made eunuchs, shall serve the King of Babylon, God hath foretold me these things.

The subject of the thirty-ninth Chapter is the seventy years captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and it was prophesied of, at a time Judah was in profound peace, and highly prosperous.

After

After these visits to the Palace which properly begin the fourth division of the Book, the Predictions are continued on in the fortieth Chapter, and henceforward Isaiah writes a regular connected series of his prophecies, the four first addresses respect the Messiah, his manifestation, with many introductory and attendant circumstances, and the first of them is the preaching of John the Baptist, recorded and prophesied of seven hundred years before he was born.

The general subjects pursued in the following Books are the Restoration of the Jewish Church after their captivity; the vanity and destruction of idols; a display of the power and providence of God; the Return of the Jews from Babylon; but afterwards their rejection and the call of the Gentiles.

The fourth Book of Isaiah is wrote in a stile much the most sublime and elegant. Wise select, and forcible addresses to his Brethren, divinely animated and pathetic, well suited to rouse the indolent, reprove and alarm the guilty, as well as to impart consolation to the pious and believing Jew. With manly eloquence exhorting and reasoning with his Countrymen, warmly interesting their feelings, and pathetically arresting the heart,

In

In the forty-third Chapter you read a reviving and most affectionate consolation.

“ Fear not; I have redeemed thee; thou art
 “ mine; when thou passest through the waters
 “ (under bondage to Egypt), I will be with thee,
 “ and through the Rivers (referring to Babylon)
 “ they shall not overflow thee. When thou
 “ walkest through the Fire (the devastation of
 “ Macedon) thou shalt not be burnt; neither
 “ shall the Flame (the Roman power) kindle
 “ upon thee. I am the Lord thy God, the
 “ Holy One of Israel thy Saviour.”

Isaiah's tender and affectionate feelings are still more displayed in the forty-fifth and forty-sixth Chapters. He had discharged his duty; he had foretold their captivity, and now he gives them in his own hand writing, a certificate, fully assuring them of deliverance, and re-establishment. After seventy years bondage they should most certainly return from Babylon, rebuild their City and Temple, possess again their own estates, to comfort and acquire their confidence, he names their deliverer (by name) Cyrus, the future conqueror of Babylon, above two hundred years before he was born, and gives him the title of the anointed of the Lord.

This

This celebrated Hero extended his conquests over all Asia, from the River Indus to the Ægean Sea, immense were his treasures and his spoils, Asia abounding in wealth and luxury.

The Prophet's predictions respecting Persia are all under the name of Elam. Persia was not a name known in the life time of Isaiah.

The Chaldeans were haughty, over-bearing and unmerciful, and more of God's judgments are awfully denounced against them in the forty-seventh Chapter, and the Prophet assigns the reason, they were intended as warnings, and foretold as excitements to amendment.

In the next Chapter Isaiah addresses and pleads with his Countrymen, and he tells them, God in kind condescension, was impressing on their minds events which (however awful) would certainly come to pass, reasoning, as it were, with his People, convincing them of error, exciting them to penitence, and thus affectionately compelling them to obedience; pursuing this pathetic stile, the Prophet in the next Chapter, by the most forcible emblems of sympathy and compassion, and the kindest expressions of regard calls up every tender

tender feeling, and surprizes you by contrasting it with the loving kindness of Jehovah.

“ Can a Mother forget her sucking child, that
 “ she should not have compassion on the child
 “ of her womb; yes; she may forget, yet will I
 “ not forget thee, O! Jerufalem.”

What heart but must yield to such powerful yearnings, and pleadings of humanity!

The following Chapters make up the fifth division of the Book, and describe more particularly the appearance of our Saviour and the character of his Kingdom, from the fifty-second, quite to the end of the fifty-third, is one manifest, plain, and uninterrupted prediction of the Messiah, as the Evangelist St. John, and the Apostle St. Paul expressly inform us. Who can read this elegant Oration, almost a Funeral Dirge, without a tear of anguish and astonishment. Although a prophesy, it seems an actual review, wonderfully affecting and distressful, the circumstances of our Saviour's life, sufferings, and death, delineated with such precision and minuteness, heightened with every feature of ignominy and distress, that you view a
 portrait

portrait clearly representing things past, not events which were to take place seven hundred years afterwards.

The subjects of the fifty-fourth Chapter are blessings and promises to the Gentiles; after the delivery of these prophecies, Isaiah calls upon all and every one, to make the right use of the lessons and instructions given them, pathetically reasoning, and forcibly deducing his arguments from the inexhaustible mercy and goodness of God, and with sublime beauty, the Prophet again contrasts the ways of God with the ways of Man.

“ My thoughts are not as your thoughts,
 “ neither are your ways, my ways, saith the
 “ Lord. As the Heaven's are higher than the
 “ earth, so are my ways, higher than your
 “ ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

In the fifty-ninth Chapter Isaiah reveals the covenant of the Redeemer, in the sixty-fifth, the rejection of the Jews, and calling in of the Gentiles.

The Book then concludes with directions how to serve God in sincerity, the most reviving consolations to the humble and awful denunciations against the ungodly and impenitent.

Manasseh, a Son of Hezekiah, at twelve years old ascended the Throne of Judah, he grew up a bloody Idolatrous and most abandoned Prince, (though he was afterwards as much noticed for his penitence). The Prophets had severely reprimanded the young Prince, and in consequence of their threats and denunciations, Manasseh treated them with the highest insolence and cruelty, among other acts of despotism and brutish inhumanity, he passed sentence on this good Man, ordering him out to a bloody execution, most barbarously commanding that the Prophet should be sawn asunder, and as Authors have asserted, with a wooden saw.

He was buried near Jerusalem, on the side of Mount Sion, by the Royal Sepulchre, and under a very famous Oak, named Rogel.

Besides his inspired knowledge, Isaiah had a mind well cultivated and improved with all the learning of the East. He is said to have shone the brightest Luminary in the Jewish Church.

On account of the clearness of his Prophecies, respecting the Messiah, he acquired the name of the Evangelical Prophet, and St. Jerom remarks that Zenophon's History is an
 excellent

excellent comment on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah; his Wife was always revered as a Prophetess.

The most ancient encomium we meet with in History, respecting the Prophet, is

By an excellent spirit he foresaw what would come to pass, and secret things or ever they came to be, for he was great and faithful in vision, in his life-time the Sun went backward, he lengthened out the King's life, and comforted those who mourned in Sion.

Ecclesiasticus, ch. xlviii.



E S S A Y XXVI.

O N T H E

L I F E , P R O P H E S I E S , A N D B O O K S

O F

J E R E M I A H.

A NAME of high honour. The Hebrew word implies, the Exaltation of the Lord.

About the year of the World three thousand three hundred and seventy-four, and six hundred and thirty years before the birth of our Saviour, Jeremiah, Son of Hilkiāh, a native of Anathoth, a village three miles from Jerusalem, appeared in his Prophetic Character in that City, and he ranked the second among the greater Prophets.

About

About the age of fourteen, at that very early period of life, Jeremiah was distinguished and noticed with many tokens, and intimations, respecting his future Prophetic Office and Employment.

At first, modestly pleading his youth, he sought, with much diffidence, every opportunity of declining the appointment. Jeremiah made choice of the study of Physick, and, he is said, for some years, to have practised as a Physician in Jerusalem. Josiah, that virtuous and amiable young Prince, was at that time King of Judah; and although Hezekiah, with true piety and diligence, had collected a number of Parchment Rolls, containing Copies of the Law, and caused them to be dispersed throughout every Town and City in his Kingdom, yet neither the King nor the High Priest could ever find one of them. The Book of the Law, even at Jerusalem, had now been given up, for lost, sixty years, and on making a general repair, and removing for that purpose a vast load of lumber, the High Priest cast his eye upon the Book, he sent it off instantly by his Secretary to the Palace, and ordered him to give it into his Majesty's own hand. Josiah with great zeal anxiously set about reading it, and when the King saw the very terrible judgments* therein denounced, he rent his cloaths, expressed the liveliest

* Deuteronomy xxviii, xxix, xxx, xxxi.

liveliest sorrow, and with true piety and earnest warmth busied himself in restoring the pure Worship of God in the Temple, the City, and throughout his Kingdom, abolishing every where, the worship of the Groves and every species of Idolatry. In the eleventh year of the reign of Josiah, during that period, while the Book of the Law was lost, and some short time before this best of Princes had so zealously employed himself and his whole Court, in hopes of averting from his own family and their's, the sad judgments denounced, Jeremiah made his publick appearance as a Prophet in Jerusalem.

In the thirty-first year of his reign, and thirtyninth of his age, in the field of battle, by a random shot, Josiah received a mortal wound while he was reviewing his troops and reconnoitring the Enemy. The King was sitting in his Chariot, his servants lifted him into another Carriage, and they hastily drove back to Jerusalem. Josiah lived only till he reached the Palace, fainting and dying, as the blood was never stopped, but kept pouring out all the way from his wound.

On an event so piteous and distressful, Jeremiah wrote his first Book of the Lamentations, a Funeral Dirge, sung by a chosen Band of Singing Men and Singing Women, in solemn and mourn-

mournful procession, as they followed after his corpse, in Princely Pomp, with all its funeral honours, at the burial of good King Josiah. This first Book of the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah is lost, the second and only one we have, was wrote on the sure conviction, the Prophet then had, of the final destruction of Jerusalem.

The first Chapter opens with the Prophet's call and the commission given him; Jeremiah's modest excuse; God's condescending answer and encouraging assurances. It gives a list of the Kingdoms whose future destiny was to be the subject of his prophecies. Jerusalem, Babylon, Persia, and Egypt; and also the significant emblems and visions, modes of intelligence, by which God was pleased to converse with his Prophet.

Jeremiah's first embassy is to Jerusalem, and a regular succession of awful and very interesting addresses fill up all the Chapters to the tenth. Go from Anathoth to Jerusalem, with my just reproofs and admonitions, and in order to impress them on my People, remind them first of the wonders I have already wrought for Israel; after which, the Prophet is directed earnestly to call upon his Brethren, to give a reason for their apostacy and revolt, and he
here

here argues the case and pathetically converses with them. In the fourth Chapter, the Prophet's language is changed, and a martial stile adopted. " Blow ye the trumpet ; Assemble yourselves ; " Get ye into the fenced Cities ; Set up the " Standard in Sion". God was now about to punish them, sending against them foreign enemies, his servant from the North, for Babylon was North of Jerusalem. The Prophet with lively spirit pursues his alarm, represents the trumpets as already sounding, and the noise and fury of the battle, and then in glowing colours describes, the approaching Destruction and the Havock of War. " The Enemy shall " gather, and pour down upon you as the Clouds, " his Chariots shall rattle as the Whirlwind, his " Horses swifter than Eagles. Destruction upon " destruction. O, my Soul! the Trumpets " sound in my ears."

The fifth Chapter begins. Run ye to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem, and then see ye, if ye can find one single man truly religious, and behold I will pardon the City, strongly expressive of the universal spread of corruption over People and Priests, over Magistrates, Judges, Nobles, and Princes. As a punishment for such depravity, wherefore says the Prophet, " A Lion out of the Forest (Nebuchadnezzar) greedy

greedy and ravenous as a Wolf, and watchful as a Leopard shall spoil and devour them. A little further Jeremiah strikingly calls the attention of his hearers, to another more familiar emblem, expressive of the Sovereign controul and amazing power of Jehovah. "Fear ye not me
 "saith the Lord, will ye not tremble at my
 "presence, who have set bounds to the raging
 "sea, although the waves thereof toss them-
 "selves, yet can they not prevail, though they
 "roar, yet can they not pass over," intimating that his power so visible in the boisterous sea with much more apparent ease, could controul their rebellious and unruly spirits.

The Prophet on a review of the fore evils, he had so awfully denounced on his Country, at length affectionately breaks out in the ninth Chapter. "O that my head were waters, and
 "my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might
 "weep day and night—Oh! that I had in the
 "Wilderness a lodging place for way-faring
 "Men," a hut or a cottage to hide me from being an eye witness to the sad calamities of Judah.

The tenth Chapter is addressed to the ten Tribes, and many of them were already in Captivity. The Prophet wisely admonishes them against such institutions, customs and idolatries, as they would now witness, and with

great propriety contrasts the Idols of Babylon with the Lord Jehovah; in the eleventh verse you read a Jewish confession of Faith, and what is well worthy of notice, although the Chapter was wrote in Hebrew, this verse alone is in the Chaldee letter. That his Countrymen when in Captivity might answer their Idolatrous Seducers, in the very words of the Prophet, he would not even trust them to translate it. The Prophet repeatedly, with the most earnest zeal, guards and admonishes his suffering brethren against idol worship, temptations they would henceforward be sadly exposed to in Babylon. In the twelfth Chapter Jeremiah impresses on their minds by way of encouragement, God's forbearance and his promises to the penitent, in the spirit of prophesy he extends these glorious blessings to the Gentiles, and foretells their conversion and ingraftment among the Jews, they should be joint partakers of the root and fatness of the Olive tree.† In the thirteenth the Prophet wisely reasons with his Countrymen on the extreme danger of persisting in evil habits, adding thereby sin to sin, the difficulty of repentance and work of reformation may at length amount almost to an impossibility. " Can the Æthiopian change his
" skin,

† Jeremiah xi. xvi. compared with Rom. xi. xvii.

" skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may ye
 " also do good that are accustomed to do evil."

Jeremiah pursues his prophecies under various apt similies, and after them follows a sad picture of distress, a severe Famine, and God's declaration to his Prophet of his manifold judgments, and utter rejection of the Jews, their Destruction, their Captivity and their Restoration, and this last (their return from Babylon) is spoke of as a still greater deliverance than their escape and miraculous rescue from Egyptian bondage. As Israel were already Captives, now follows the Prophecies which relate to the Seventy years Captivity of Judah, and in the twenty-first Chapter are recorded the calamities in the reign of Zedekiah, the Pestilence, the Famine, and the Siege of Jerusalem. For the Prophet lived to witness the sad and gradual declension and overthrow of the Kingdom of Judah. Jeremiah prophesied of that yet visible and most astonishing preservation of the Jews through a long succession of ages and Empires, that very wonderful proof of his Patronage and Sovereignty.

" Fear not Jacob my servant, for I am with
 " thee, I will make a full end of all the Nati-
 " ons whither I have driven thee, but I will
 " not make a full end of thee." The Jews live
 a distinct

a distinct People, but not according to their own laws, never electing their own Magistrates, and no where enjoying the full exercise of their Religion.

At a period of their highest glory, and while they were harassing his country, Jeremiah foretold the total overthrow and destruction of their Enemies. And the Egyptians, the Assyrians, Macedon, and Rome, great and powerful as they once were, are every one vanished as a dream, their power, glory, and very names are lost, while the Vanquished and Captive Jew survives his Conquerors, and although widely scattered throughout every Nation and Kingdom upon Earth, preserves in them all, the form of his Religion, and professes an adherence to it, notwithstanding their Apostasies were so frequent, and so often reprov'd, while they lived under their own Kings, and within sight of their Temple.

The Prophet Jeremiah will surprize you with the minuteness of his Predictions respecting Babylon, and they were uttered at a time when that City and Empire were at their highest Glory and in all their Pride. In the fourth year of the reign of Zedekiah, King of Judah, and sixty years before the Siege and Capture of Babylon,
the

the Prophet sent his Predictions respecting it, by Seraiah, to some of his Brethren in that haughty City. In his twenty-fifth Chapter, he names the express time when it was to happen, he tells them by whom, the Medes; in vivid colours, he minutely describes the indolence, timidity and cowardice of the Babylonians, they would shut themselves up in their walls. Jeremiah prophesies the Siege; the turning of the Channel of the River; the exact time, at a Grand Festival; and that the City should be taken by surprize. After this the Prophet foretold its total destruction, its present desolate state, the demolition of the walls and final overthrow.

Before Zedekiah had been placed on the Throne of Israel, Nebuchadnezzar had carried away to Babylon many of the Jews, and Jeremiah, out of kindness and friendship, kept writing letters to them, whenever the tribute money was sent, desiring they would not flatter themselves with any present expectations of deliverance, Seventy years Captivity must be fulfilled before their release; upon which these suffering Captives, distressed and angry at what the Prophet had told them, wrote letters back to their friends in Jerusalem, praying to have Jeremiah punished for uttering (as they supposed) the dic-
tates

tates of the King of Babylon, and not those of the God of Israel.

A Torrent of corruption at this time overspread Jerusalem, and Jeremiah's unwearied attempts to stem it were unnaturally and ungratefully received. The Prophet was basely insulted by Kings, by Priests and People, and upon a prediction he had boldly uttered respecting Jerusalem, and the Captivity of its inhabitants, Jeremiah was arrested and imprisoned. He lived to see the sad accomplishment of his Prophecy, the City besieged and taken, its Palaces, and the magnificent Temple destroyed by fire, its numerous Inhabitants led away captive to Babylon, and at that sad and memorable period he anxiously employed himself in administering all the comfort in his power to his sorrowful and desponding Countrymen; in the thirtieth Chapter he assured them they would again return; their City and their Temple would be again rebuilt; they should renew their possessions, their lands and estates. So certain was the Prophet of this happy event their Restoration, that houses and fields and vineyards should be again at their disposal, that he purchases the reversion of an estate, to take place after they should have returned from

from Captivity, the title deed to be made out to him and to his heirs. Such a purchase afforded his Countrymen a full proof of the Prophet's own belief, and expectation of their return, and was a real comfort to them, under their oppression and afflictions. " I weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver, I subscribed the evidences, and I sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in balances."

To animate them more still, the Prophet goes on describing the general joy and festivity, which would take place on the day of their Return, their again entering on their ancient Possessions, a Recovery of their long lost privileges and enjoyments, a Restoration to the favour and protection of God. It is very usual with the Prophet to contrast his subject, in order to make his addresses more noticed, and impress them the stronger, he therefore first strikingly call to mind, and represents to them, the sorrow and anguish of that day when they would first be led away into Captivity.

" A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentations and bitter weepings. Rachael weeping for her Children, refused to be comforted, because
" they

“ they were not.” Rachael was Jacob’s beloved Wife, her Tomb was situated between the Cities of Ramah and Bethlehem. In the melancholy journey of the Israelites, when they were to be carried away captive to Babylon, they were to pass by this Pillar and Tomb of Rachael. Jeremiah, by a beautiful figure, pathetically introduces her, as rising out of her Sepulchre, the afflicted Mother of both the Tribes, and weeping for all her Children, bewailing the dire and sad catastrophe, Sons and Daughters led away to bondage. In the self-same district of Bethlehem, near Ramah, when Herod butchered the Children from two years old and under, many Mothers suffered a second, most afflictive blow ; no doubt a voice was again heard, bitter Lamentations, Cries, and the tenderest yearnings for the innocent Victims of his Madness.

The many Threats and Denunciations the Prophet had repeatedly and so boldly uttered, occasioned him a very long imprisonment, and it was while under confinement Jeremiah caused Baruch (his Scribe) to write from his mouth, the tenor and words of his Threatnings and Prophecies, Baruch carried them to the Temple on a solemn Fast Day, and read them audibly in the hearing of a large concourse of People then and there assembled. In the middle of his Speech the
Parch-

Parchment Roll was snatched out of Baruch's hand, and hastily ran away with to the Palace, and laid before the King, Jehoiakim read a column or two, grew warm and angry, cut the roll in pieces, flung it into the fire and burnt it, furious and impatient at the judgments awaiting him.

When the City of Jerusalem was taken, the Assyrian Prince ordered his General Officers to enquire for the Prophet Jeremiah, and to grant him protection and safety before the City was burnt, or even the Soldiers admitted to plunder. His liberty and license of living where he pleased, was sealed and presented to him. Jeremiah being told his friend Gedaliah had got the appointment of Governor, he went and dwelt with him at Mizpeh, Gedaliah ordered him a supply of provision, desired him to settle himself at any place he liked best, but he first exacted from him, according to form, the oaths of allegiance to the King of Babylon.

At Mizpeh, Gedaliah, the Governor, was assassinated by Ishmael, a Prince of the blood royal of Judah, who had taken refuge at Ammon. The Prince with ten spirited and resolute companions who were all of a party, came on a visit to the Governor's house, Gedaliah re-

ceived them as guests, hospitably and respectfully entertained them, but they, availing themselves of the opportunity, at a Feast he had prepared for them, basely murdered the Governor and all the brave Chaldeans of his Court.

On this bloody, and inhuman event, Jeremiah was carried away into Egypt. The Prophet there foretold the conquest of Egypt, by Nebuchadnezzar, and the Capture and death of the King. "All (he said) would be speedily accomplished, the destruction would be swift and sudden, the Gods of Egypt would be all destroyed." These predictions were very terrifying and obnoxious to the Egyptians, and they are the subjects of the forty-third Chapter, and the Book of Prophecies, as far as the forty-fourth, relates principally events which happened after the Captivity of Israel, but before the Captivity of Judah; and the following Chapters, to the last but one, have all a reference to the latter, they relate almost wholly to the Gentiles, and seem placed here by themselves because they are unconnected with the rest.

The Destruction of the Philistines, at a time the Country was at perfect peace and quiet, is prophesied of in the forty-seventh Chapter, and you view a beautiful Figure at the end of it, strikingly

ingly elegant. Jeremiah repeatedly gives Life to the Sword of God, at his command it sharpens, polishes, prepares to obey, sets out at the appointed moment, and on the errand he commissions it. Sometimes he names the places, as against Askelon and the Cities on the Seashore; after which he returns it to its scabbard and its place. In the forty-eighth, he prophesies the judgments on Moab, the meaning of the word is, "of a Father," and Moab was one of the incestuous Sons of Lot, that by the eldest Daughter. The forty-ninth contains heavy denunciations and threatenings against the Oppressors and Enemies of Judah.

The destruction and total overthrow of Babylon is prophetically foretold in the following Chapters, and Babylon was then the glory of Kingdoms, the Beauty of the Chaldees, the Golden City, abounding in treasures, its walls, Palaces, hanging gardens and artificial canals, for pomp and magnificence, the wonder of the World.

The fifty-second Chapter is added by Ezra to complete the History. Ezra represents the Seige, and Capture of Jerusalem; Jeremiah had expressly foretold it, and now, all that the Prophet had predicted was actually accom-
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plished

plished Nebuchadnezzar, the Tyrant and the Conqueror, had glutted his barbarous and wanton cruelty on Zedekiah, his Captive, and caused him to witness the publick massacre of all his Children, after which, he struck out both the King's eyes, indelibly to fix on his mind, this last and most horrid Sight of all his life. The Chapter further informs you of Nebuzar-adan, the King's Commander in Chief, his having executed his commission from the Court of Babylon; and burnt down the Palaces, the houses of the Nobles, and the whole City to the ground, together with the superb and most magnificent Temple itself; after it had stood four hundred and seventy years, the ornament and glory of the World.

This Chapter is a useful Preface to the Funeral Odes called the Book of the Lamentations.

Jeremiah had executed his High Prophetic Office with affection, zeal, and fidelity, between forty and fifty years, and he is said by some to have been now stoned to death at Tahpanhes a royal City of Egypt, and by others to have been thrown into a pit and transfix'd with darts. Alexander the great, on visiting the tomb of Jeremiah, ordered his urn to be removed

removed to Alexandria, and built a magnificent monument sacred to his memory.

His prophecies were wrote under the several reigns of Josiah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah Kings of Judah, and the fortieth and forty-fourth Chapters, under Gedaliah, who had obtained the appointment of Governor from the Court of Babylon.

The Prophet's Stile is wholly plaintive, adapted to Pity and Compassion. Every soft and yielding passion is here excited, expressive of the most affectionate feelings for his Country. But his earnest and zealous Admonitions, least his deluded Friends should be over persuaded to forsake their Religion and their God, are strikingly animated and pathetic. Some of his Brethren were already in Babylon, others almost on the road, and they would all, ere long, be eye-witnesses to the vicious indulgencies and odious prostitutions of Pagan Worship and Impiety.

ON THE
BOOK OF THE LAMENTATIONS
OF THE
PROPHET JEREMIAH.

A HIGHLY, elegant, and beautiful Funeral Ode, rather indeed, Several Odes, made on mournful occasions, and here collected together.

Every Verse is a Sentence, and diversified with some new, strong, lively Image of heart-felt Sorrow and Anxiety. A Book or Song of Mourning, and it was chanted publicly on very solemn distressful Occasions, Seasons of national or private Calamity. The first Book (unfortunately lost) was the Grand Funeral Dirge sung by a number of Singing Men, a chosen Band, and a Chorus of Virgins in mournful Procession, as they carried good King Josiah to be buried.

This

This is properly the second Book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, the occasion of the Prophet's writing it, was, the sure Conviction he then had of the final Destruction of Jerusalem.

The thoughts seem to crowd in irregularly upon the Prophet's mind, and he utters them with amazing tenderness, elegance and ease, as one Image, Person, or Figure, led him naturally on to another.

The Book is divided into five Parts; in the first, second and fourth, the Prophet is himself the Speaker, or he represents Jerusalem as speaking. In the third, the whole Body of the Jews in Chorus speak. The fifth is a kind of Epilogue, in which this same whole Body, groaning under all the pressure of Captivity, pour out their Sorrows and Supplications fervently to God in Prayer.

To excite attention and aid the memory, the Prophet, with great propriety, assents to the usual custom in Dirges and Funeral Orations, and subdivides each of these five Parts into two and twenty Stanza's, and each Stanza in general consists of three Verses, principally acrostical, the first letter of each Stanza, following the order of the Hebrew Alphabet; the fifth Book differs
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in this particular, and the Verses are much shorter than the others. The third Book contains sixty-six Verses.

The stile of this whole Ode is copious and pathetic, adapted to the tenderest feelings of Grief and Despondency. The Prophet muses on the sad and melancholy subject, and deplores the miseries of his Country most distressfully. In so very concise a manner, no Poem displays such very pertinent and so uncommon a variety of suitable Circumstances and Images.

A celebrated Author says, Sorrow never flowed in so natural, so tender, so prevailing a Pathos, as in these mournful Elegies. One would think that every letter was wrote with a tear; every word the sound of a breaking heart; that the Author was a Man compounded of Sorrows; disciplined to grief from his infancy; One who never breathed but in sighs, nor spoke without a groan.



ESSAY XXVII.

ON THE LIFE AND PROPHECIES OF EZEKIEL.

THE name, Ezekiel, or the strength of God, is happily expressive of the Confidence and Fortitude this Prophet displayed.

Ezekiel was the Son of Buzi, a native of Sarera, his Family were of the Sacerdotal race and of the house of Aaron, he was therefore born both a Priest and a Prophet.

In the Reign of Jehoiachin, three months after his Coronation, Nebuchadnezzar, King of

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Babylon, marched a powerful Army into Judæa, and as soon as he came near Jerusalem, the young Prince, by the advice of the Prophet Jeremiah, in the most humble and submissive manner, with all his Wives, and his Mother the Queen Dowager, his Nobles and his whole Court came out in a body, threw open the City-gates, surrendered themselves up, sued for mercy, and paid him homage. Nebuchadnezzar was, inexorable, the Jewish Prince with all his party were led away State-Prisoners to Babylon.

At this time Ezekiel the Prophet, and Mordecai Uncle to Queen Esther were made captive and put under confinement, they were not suffered to accompany the Royal Family to Babylon, but were soon after placed with many others, on the banks of the Chebar, a River of Mesopotamia, eastward of the Euphrates, this River emptied itself into the Euphrates about two hundred miles north of Babylon. But Ezekiel was afterwards brought to the Metropolis, together with the celebrated Mordecai his Countryman, and the Prophet from time to time foretold at Babylon, almost wholly the same events as Jeremiah prophesied of in Jerusalem. This last Prophet had declared King Zedekiah should never see Babylon, Ezekiel predicted Zedekiah should be carried there, and end his
days

days in Babylon, both Prophecies exactly came to pass, Nebuchadnezzar found the means to reconcile them. By striking out the King's eyes, Zedekiah never saw Babylon, but he was led away Captive, from Jerusalem, to grace so proud a conquest, and add to the high honours of the Assyrian triumph. Zedekiah lived some years afterwards a State Prisoner, in Babylon, and died there.

The Prophecies of Ezekiel were principally uttered in the former part of their Captivity, the sins and vices of his Countrymen were yet practised, many of them not forsaken, and the Jews as yet remained unhumiliated, the Prophet's threats were thundering and tremendous, his rebukes strikingly severe, intended to open their eyes, awake them from their lethargy, and they must have roused the most dejected and desponding Jew. Some years after, under their sad sufferings and persecution, when they were totally discouraged, the Prophet Daniel, the Fourth and last of the great Prophets was commissioned by God in much mercy to comfort and revive them.

Ezekiel's call and commission is magnificently, yet with reverential awe, related in the beginning of his Book. "The glory of the Lord at-

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"tended by his Cherubims," a Series of extraordinary visions (on the banks of the River Chebar) accompanied with a voice distinctly uttering his awful directions and information. The Prophet usually dates his predictions from the *Æra* of his appointment to the prophetic office, and he was then said to be thirty years of age. The fourth Chapter opens with the Siege about to take place, the approach of the Chaldæan Army, the Battering Rams, the engines of the besiegers, and the Horrors and the Din of war. Nebuchadnezzar under the emblem of an eagle, swift, strong and rapacious, is taking his lofty flight, and perching upon the highest Cedar, even on Jerusalem. At this time Zedekiah was still reigning in Judah, and Jehoiachin and his Mother State Prisoners in Babylon. In the following Chapters the Prophet represents the wickedness of the Jews who were yet remaining at Jerusalem, under very fanciful emblems and parables, and he expressly names the punishments God was intending them. In the seventeenth, Ezekiel relates, with so much certainty, the present King's overthrow and subsequent Captivity, together with all his People, as to name it as an event which had already taken place.

After

After the Prophecies on Jerusalem, the Prophet foretels the destruction of those Nations, who were now exulting in high triumph over his disconsolate Countrymen, and Nebuchadnezzar was the instrument God first employed to punish Tyre, Egypt, Ammon, Moab, and the Philistines.

Ezekiel with wonderful spirit and elegance describes the flourishing state of Tyre, and contrasts it with its overthrow and destruction, and some of these Chapters are beautiful and perfect elegies.† In the height of all its glory, Tyre, the mart of Nations, the crowning City, whose merchants were Princes, whose traffickers the honourable of the earth, conveying all the commodities of the East to the West, and the West to the East, Ezekiel prophesies its destruction, Nebuchadnezzar should become Master of that ancient highly towering City; in the twenty-sixth Chapter and twenty-ninth, the Prophet is so sure of the fact, that he relates this also as a transaction which had already taken place.

The King of Babylon is said to have made his soldiers serve a hard service against Tyre,

† Chapters xxvii xxviii.

every head was made bald, every shoulder was peeled, the siege lasted thirteen years, and when the City at last was taken, Nebuchadnezzar was sadly disappointed of all its riches and its spoils, it is literally and expressly said, He received no wages, the Tyrians had carried off every thing, as soon as the inhabitants saw the foundation of their walls shaken by the Battering Rams, all their valuables, and even their furniture they put on board their ships and carried off to the Islands. Nebuchadnezzar found the City empty. Ezekiel was commissioned on this occasion to promise the King the conquest of Egypt as a reward. The destruction of Tyre was to be final, it was to be laid as bare as a rock, a place to spread nets upon, and from the centre of Trade, frequented by merchants from East to West, Tyre is now a heap of ruins, a landing place for the boats of a few Fisher-men. The Prophet gives us, yet with elegant conciseness, the whole history of this mighty change. The high prosperity of Tyre, its wealth and grandeur, introduced luxury, pride, violence and tyranny, self-conceit, profaneness, the sure and certain forerunners of destruction every where.

The Prophet next foretells the conquest of Egypt. It should (he said) be swift and sudden, Egypt's Idols and her Gods should be all destroyed,

stroyed. By a beautiful and very natural figure, although highly fanciful, the Prophet describes the indolence and haughty pride of Pharoah Hophra, a Huge Swelling Crocodile lying in the midst of his waters. " My River is my own, I " have made it for myself." Jeremiah prophesied he should be taken and slain, Ezekiel foretells desolation to his Country, and it should last forty years, during which time its inhabitants should be all Slaves.

Besides the Conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, it was also invaded and laid waste by the Persians. The prophecies of Ezekiel apply to both the Persian and the Babylonish yoke.

Cambyfes, a celebrated General, with a formidable Army entered Egypt at Pelusium, a fortified Town and Key to the whole Country.

The General boldly led his Troops up to the gates of Pelusium, but artfully in the front he placed a number of cats and dogs, and a drove of sheep and oxen; animals all held sacred by the Egyptians; seeing in full view their Gods, no one ventured to cast a javelin or shoot an arrow. Cambyfes stormed the Town made a breach in the walls, entered with his Army
thus

thus preceeded by their Gods. Cambyfes, the General, walked forwards to their Temple, with his own hand, he flew Apis, the sacred Ox, the God of Egypt, and demolished their Idols and their Altars.

The thirty-first Chapter is a beautiful historical painting of Nebuchadnezzar's greatness, power, security, self-sufficiency and haughtiness, contrasted with his downfall and destruction. "I have cast him down even unto Hell." In the thirty-third Ezekiel is introduced as a Watchman over Israel, receives his appointment, and has his duty assigned him, and God condescendingly reasons with his Prophet, in language so pathetic and persuasive. "As I live" (saith the Lord) I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his evil way and live; turn ye, turn ye—why will you die, O! house of Israel?" The Kingdom of Christ is a subject of part of the thirty-fourth. The Future Glorious Shepherd the desponding and dispersed flock. In the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth judgment is announced on Mount Seir, and it was then inhabited by the Edomites. After which follows an express, most merciful and gracious promise of
Restoration

Restoration to Israel, from their present Bondage and Captivity.

In the thirty-seventh you read the instructive and very fanciful Vision, of the Valley of Dry Bones ; affording the despairing Captive, the most reviving consolation from the visible Presence and the Power of God ; A Resurrection lively and descriptive, and addressing them pointedly in a variety of views : A Soul emerging from Sin and Death, to Life and Righteousness : A Restoration of the Service of the Temple, now long laid aside ; its Liberty, Peace, and Devotion : A Resurrection of the Bodies of Believers to Life Eternal. Such a Representation irresistibly inspired the desponding Captive with Faith and Hope ; the Power which he now witnessed, was so much more than equal to his former Dismay, with how much ease could it collect his persecuted and dispersed Nation, bring them back to their native Home, enable them to rebuild their Temple, and restore and re-establish his People. And the chapter concludes with the animating Prophecy of the Glories and Graces of the Kingdom of Christ, his Tabernacle should be with Israel, He would be their God, they should be his People.

The thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth Chapters, are Prophecies of Gog of the land of
 Vol. II. X x Magog ;

Magog; a Northern Power coming with horses and horsemen. He is to come up against Israel in the latter days, and he is to fall upon the Mountains of Israel; there the Judgments of God are predicted to overtake him. These are to be the last enemies of the Jewish Church, and is a Prophecy of Ezekiel's, which yet remains to be fulfilled. The Mogul Tartars are still called by the name of Gog; and the Turks, originally Natives of Tartary, are supposed to be here meant. The Land of Canaan has long been in the possession of the Turks, and the Power and Strength of Europe has been as yet employed in vain to rescue it out of their hands. In what manner this Glorious Prophecy is to receive its completion, time only can explain; as after these promised Victories, the Prophet foretells a distant and final return of the Jews (in these latter days) from their wide dispersion, and a dissipation of the sad gloom overshadowing them. God has reserved that work for himself, when that once happy Country shall be again the Scene of some future display of the Majesty, the Power, and the Providence of God.

The lively genius of Ezekiel, sprightly and fertile, abounding with numerous and very fanciful images, exhibits much wise Instruction, very
 awful

awful Threats, and the keenest Reproof, under the varying Types and Emblems of a Seige, a Hair, a Chain, Coals of Fire, the Eagle and Vine, Lions Whelps, a boiling Pot, and dry Bones.

The Prophet seems to have executed his high Commission with great fidelity, and has merited a very just Encomium from an Apocryphal Writer, by his earnest endeavours to instruct and amend his Countrymen. The encouragement he offers them is so wisely adapted to a State of Punishment, and always ambitiously aiming to keep alive a watchful and submissive Reliance on God.

The Prophet's Stile is unequalled in Force, Impetuosity, Weight and Grandeur. Such tremendous and very striking Addresses to his Brethren, now Captives in Babylon, could not fail to excite their attention, awake and rouse them from their lethargy, dejection, and despair. The Language is bold, vehement, lofty and magnificent, a Stile of Majesty peculiar to the East; and Ezekiel, for his great freedom, his boldness, and the liberties he took with his Countrymen, was by them privately put to death. The Prophet's Remains were placed in a Sepulchre, in the Land of Maur, between the two Rivers Euphrates and

Chabar. The Prophet's Tomb was frequented and noticed with a superstitious Devotion; and some pious Jews are said to have kept a lamp always burning in it.

Near this famous Sepulchre, a Synagogue and Library were erected; and in the latter was said to have been deposited the original manuscript Writing of his Prophecies; and it was always ceremoniously brought out and publicly read before all the People on the Day of Expiation.

To suppress the murmurs and ingratitude of his fellow-captives, the Prophet encourages them to resignation, by promises of Deliverance; and towards the close of his Book, reveals to them many Prophecies, assuring them of the certainty of their Return, and of the re-establishment of their City and Temple. Ezekiel's Description of this new Building is a Mystical and Emblematical Representation, and its service altogether Jewish.

The Hebrews considered their Temple as the high Honour, Glory, and Safeguard of their Nation, the Desire of their Eyes, and Dwelling-place of their Strength. When the Prophet foretold, and so magnificently displayed this new Temple, his Countrymen stood in great need of Comfort, Information, and Promises: They would not probably have been desirous of returning home, where the former Temple lay in ruins,
had

had they not been spirited up and encouraged by the promises of a New One, as well as a Restoration of the Common Wealth.

The Temple of their God, they looked upon as a Pledge of his Presence, his Dwelling among his People; and the last Words and Conclusion of the Prophet's Book, is a very apt and glorious Motto for it:

“ THE LORD IS THERE.”



ESSAY

E S S A Y XXVIII.

O N T H E

B O O K O F

D A N I E L.

H I S

L I F E, C H A R A C T E R, A N D
P R O P H E S I E S.

AFTER a close, long-protracted, and harassing siege, which had at length occasioned a Famine and a Pestilence, the Walls of Jerusalem and its strong Holds were forced, a breach was made by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and an entrance wide enough for his chariots and his army. The Conqueror levelled with the ground, and burnt to ashes, its Royal Palaces, the Temple itself, the most magnificent Edifice

fire in the World, and he set fire to the whole City.

*The young Princes, the beautiful and choicest Youth and Flower of the Nobility, were all sent captives to Babylon; amongst these was Daniel, of Royal Blood, at the age of eighteen, his person highly elegant and pleasing.

In compliance with the custom of the times, Daniel, as a Badge of Slavery, was now named Belshazzar. The King placed Daniel with Three more under the first and most learned Preceptors of Chaldæa. Under the advantages of so celebrated a Court, this amiable Youth, during three years, was trained and instructed in all the Learning of the East, God giving him Skill and Knowledge in Wisdom and Learning, and in understanding of dreams and visions, modes of conveying information peculiar to those days; and under these wise Tutors and Magicians, Daniel acquired Languages, a Knowledge of the Polity, Constitution, Laws and Customs of Chaldæa.

The King himself was present when they passed their publick Examinations; he took always a pleasure in their exercises, and in conversing with them. His Majesty had often remarked to his Nobles, after such interviews, that he had found none of all the Youths in Babylon so sensible, learned,

and wife as Belfhazzar and his three Companions.

A table was kept for Daniel, and the three young Men in the Palace, and it was covered daily with elegant dainties from the King's own table. Daniel, amiable and good, a captive youth, and in a foreign court, very much objected to this luxurious parade; and one day he took courage, and addressed himself to Aschanes, the Steward of the Household, requesting, that the provision and generous allowance from the King's table, might all be carried to his Family, and that he would set before him and his companions only Dates and Pulse. So pleasing a youth could not but be beloved; Aschanes kindly reasons with him, would fain dissuade him from the attempt, would it not injure his health? It might alter his looks, be seen in his countenance. Daniel pleaded strongly to be indulged for a short time, would he only permit him to make trial for ten days? In case he grew thinner, or shewed any alteration for the worse, he would then immediately desist, and live as he should advise him. The importunity of the sweet Youth prevailed on Aschanes; and now his temperance added new graces to his person, purity and freedom to his mind, his genius grew active and improved, his body graceful and more alert, and Aschanes soon expressed his thorough satisfaction, pleasingly

pleasingly relieved of all his fears respecting him.

Nebuchadnezzar, some time after this, was wonderfully perplexed with a Dream; and he convened his Magicians and all his Wise Men, and enquired of them what this Dream was about; for though the King felt so very uneasy and distressed, he had notwithstanding quite forgot it; and the King demanded also the Interpretation of the Dream. The Magicians met, they were all struck dumb—"The Gods alone could tell what a man dreamt." The haughty Monarch, unused to disappointment, grew highly enraged and frantic with fury; he sent for Arioch, the Captain of his Guard, and after he had passed Sentence on the whole Court, he ordered them all out to Execution. An occurrence so very extraordinary, was soon blazed abroad, and it occasioned the first display of Daniel's Skill and Superior Knowledge. This very amiable Youth was among them appointed to suffer; and he goes directly to Arioch, the Captain in Waiting, and he says, Why is the King so hasty? After which Daniel reasons with him upon the Rashness and Cruelty of the Decree, and requests an audience with his Majesty. Upon this Arioch ushered him into the Royal Presence.

Daniel most submissively approached the Throne, and he told his Majesty, he would satisfy him, respecting what he was so solicitous to know; but he first petitions the King to allow him a short respite, in order that he might retire and meet his three Companions, and with them join in Prayer to God. Upon which, the execution of the first orders was delayed; and it was now during this their fervent and united Prayer, that the Secret was imparted to Daniel; and he immediately repaired to Arioch, and obtained another audience of the King. Daniel again respectfully and most submissively addresses the Throne: He disclaimed all Merit and superior Knowledge, all possibility of finding it out of Himself. Wisely and suitably he first impresses the King's mind with the awful Power and Majesty of God; and then told him of what he had dreamt, and gave him the whole Explanation. Amazed at what he heard, the King, after the customs of the East, ordered the sweetest odours to be spread around Daniel. He then threw himself down prostrate on his face, and worshipped him, avowing his God, the God of Gods, invested Daniel with the Government of his whole Empire, called him by the name of his own God, whom he solemnly worshipped, ordered him the richest presents, and appointed him Head and Chief over all the Magicians and wise Men of his kingdom.

Daniel

Daniel reverentially instructed the King, to direct his devotions to God.

The all-wise Governor of the Universe, can reveal as much of future Revolutions as he pleases; and he has here removed the Veil, and disclosed to the Prophet Daniel, and King Nebuchadnezzar, some of the greatest and most signal Events of the World. The History of four powerful Empires are the subjects here prophetically recorded:

ASSYRIA OR CHALDÆA.

PERSIA.

MACEDONIA OR GREECE.

ROME.

The Histories of these, are the high embellishments of Literature, the study of the Learned, the amusement of the Polite; and though there were other Empires as eminent for the wisdom of their Constitution, extent of their Dominion, and length of Duration, yet the future events of these four are particularly foretold, as having a relation to the Jews, who were in captivity, with each of them in their turns: And in the History of these, we have a line of Prophecy conveyed down from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, to the full and complete establishment of the Kingdom of the Messiah.

Honours

Honours so profuse, and on a Jewish Captive, excited the envy of the Court of Babylon. The Nobles assembled, and concerted a scheme to ruin Daniel. They presented a Petition to the King, requesting him to cause to be erected on the plains of Dura, a place of general resort within the City walls, an Image of Gold, sixty cubits high. Nebuchadnezzar, accompanied by his Princes and Nobles, in the most solemn manner consecrated it. He assembled his subjects, and commanded them all, by sound of trumpet, to fall down and worship it. At a short distance, a fiery furnace was heated and prepared for all those who should refuse to pay it homage. The Jews inform us, that Daniel retired into Egypt; but others say, that on account of his high dignities and elevated station, they did not push matters so far as to accuse him; but his Companions, equally unwilling to violate the laws of their Country, and disobey the commands of God, were all three bound hand and foot, and cast into it: The History informs us, so intense was the Heat, and so furious the Flames, that it had instantly destroyed the men employed to throw them in. The King, at a distance, stood earnestly keeping his eyes fixed on so very wonderful a sight. Did we not cast three men bound into the furnace? I see four loose, and walking to and fro in the fire, unhurt, and the fourth is like

like the Son of God. Awfully impressed and astonished, the King approached as near as he safely could, to the mouth of the Furnace, and loudly calls out to them, Ye servants of the Most High God, come forth, come hither. All three walked from out the midst of the fire, their garments unchanged, and not one hair of their heads singed. In a sudden transport of devotion, the King published a fresh Edict, commanding, in the Eastern stile, every Nation, and People of every Language, who should speak amiss of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, to be put to death, and their houses made a dung-hill. After so honourable and distinguished a proof of innocence and Divine Protection, the King appointed them to posts of high Dignity and national Honours in the province of Babylon: Then ordering the Furnace to be heated seven times hotter, the King commanded the Accusers to be all thrown in, and they were instantly consumed.

Some time after this, another very extraordinary Dream perplexed the King, Nebuchadnezzar had but lately returned home a Conqueror; he had marched his victorious troops back from the wars, and just now entered Babylon in Triumph. The Dream was the representation of a Tree, which was to be hewn down.

All

All his Astrologers and Magicians were again assembled, a grand Council formed, but none of them were able to explain it. Daniel was sent for to the Palace, and introduced to the King. Daniel stood pensive before the Throne, in astonishment, and under the tenderest concern a whole hour. Nebuchadnezzar then commanded him to speak, whatsoever distress the Interpretation of his Dream might portend.

With true politeness, Daniel most pathetically accosted the King: Would to God, this inauspicious Dream might only affect his enemies. Daniel then informed him, the Tree was a representation of himself; the time would soon arrive, when he should be driven out from society, and become as a beast. Permit me now (says he) most earnestly to press upon your Majesty, such a penitential sorrow, and devout acknowledgment, as may conciliate the favour of Almighty God, and efface the remembrance of your Crimes. A twelvemonth afterwards, while the King was forgetting it, exulting and haughtily recognizing all his glory, swelled and puffed up in all his vanity, as he walked to and fro in his Palace, he was heard to say, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built by the might of my Power, and for the honour of my Majesty." While the words were yet in his mouth, Nebuchadnezzar was driven out from society, dwelt with

with the beasts of the field, fed on grass with the Ox, and his body was wetted with the dew of Heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles feathers, and his nails like birds claws. An elegant, most just, and lively portrait of insanity, approaching nearly to the canine, he retains his memory, loses his reason, and in the sport of fancy and delusion, assumes the Brute.

Under a succeeding Reign, Daniel was again summoned into the royal presence, and on a highly interesting and very awful occasion. King Belshazzar, Grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, on a high jubilee and day of publick rejoicing gave a magnificent banquet to a thousand of his Nobles, he had superbly graced his tables with the highly ornamented Golden Vessels his Ancestors had plundered, and brought away from out the Temple of Jerusalem. While he sat at table, suddenly looking up, Belshazzar saw a hand issuing from out the wall, and writing thereon, the letters were all distinct, but the words to him unintelligible, struck with horror and alarm, the King grew faint, pale and gashly, he orders in his Magicians, and all the Wise Men, but they were equally astonished and confounded with himself. The trumpets were sounded, a proclamation issued out, immense rewards instantly offered, to whomsoever should

should be found wise enough to interpret the hand writing, all human attempts seemed fruitless, all was despair, at this moment of distraction, in rushes the King's Grandmother into the Palace and ran up to the King in the Banqueting hall, ambitious and eager to comfort him, she had just recollected and names Daniel. A Jewish Captive (she said) wise and very learned, he had resolved the greatest prodigies for his ancestors, such as the Gods could only interpret. Daniel had been absent and was now happily thought of by the Queen-Mother. Daniel was immediately sent for, and ushered into the Royal Presence, and the Banqueting hall, the King had a little time to recover himself, he courteously receives Daniel, and tells him, he had heard much of his fame and wisdom, and that the spirit of his God was in him, the King names himself the splendid rewards he had offered, a chain of massy gold, to hang over the neck and shoulders, a robe of purple (a distinguished dress of honour) and the third high Ruler over all the Kingdom, to the person who should read and interpret the hand writing which he saw on the wall, and to which he now tremblingly fixed his eyes; Daniel with dignity refused his honours and his presents, but immediately tells the King, he would read to him, and interpret

pret the hand-writing. Daniel now pointedly, but gracefully addresses him, " Know, O King! " the Most High God gave to thy Father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour; " People of all nations, and of every language, " trembled and feared before him. Whom he " would he slew, and whom he would he kept " alive; whom he would he set up, and whom he " would he put down: But when his heart was " hardened, and his mind lifted up with pride, " he was deposed from his Royalties, and his " Glory taken from him; he was driven from " men, a beast's heart was given him, he dwelt " with the wild ass, he was fed with the ox, and " his body wetted with the dew, till he acknowledged the Most High God, and the appointments of the Almighty. Thou, his son, " O Belshazzar! although thou knewest this, hast " not humbled thine heart, but hast lifted up " thyself against the Lord.—See the vessels of his " House before thee.—Thou and thy Lords, thy " Wives and thy Concubines, have drunk wine " in them, and praised the gods of silver and " gold, of iron, brass, and wood, and stone, " which see not, nor hear, nor know: And the " God, in whose hand thy breath is, and whose " are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." A sudden Death was denounced (he now said) by the Hand-writing, to his Majesty, and Destruction.

on to the Empire: The words he there saw, recorded the Sentence and Condemnation:

MENE, God hath numbered thy Days.

TEKEL, Thou art weighed in the Balance.

PERES, Thy Kingdom is the Medes and Persians.

Belshazzar cloathed Daniel in purple, he put a chain of gold about his neck, and proclaimed him third Ruler over all the kingdom of Babylon, notwithstanding his speech,* which while it was highly eloquent, conveyed the keenest reproof, and must have been received in most awful consternation. "In that night was Belshazzar, the King of the Chaldæans, slain."

The river, their great security, was drained; Cyrus had diverted its course by a cut into a new channel; in that riotous night of revelling and drunkenness, the gate opposite the river was left open, two bodies of troops crossed over, rushed into the heart of the city, entered the Palace, surprized the guard, cut it all to pieces, stabbed the King, who, sword in hand, ran forth to meet them.

Belshazzar had reigned seventeen years in Babylon, and with his death ended the Empire of

*Speech. Dan. v. 17.

Affyria, fulfilling all the Prophecies of Ifaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, refpecting it; and in lefs than feventy years from the delivery of the firft Prophefy, and Interpretation of the Dream, and Vifion of the Image.

Daniel's Chronology and Calculations were for exactnefs called the Key of Time. He not only foretold events which were to happen, but the very precise time and manner. He lived a long and active life in the Courts and Councils of the greateft Monarchs, a Man of Bufinefs, a Courtier, and a Statesman. He had been during five-and-thirty years Prime Minifter in the Court of Babylon, and his prosperity was constant and flourishing during the reigns of five fucceffive Kings. Daniel lived through the reign of Darius, and during a part of the reign of Cyrus, that highly celebrated Prince, prophefied of by Ifaiah fo long before his birth, and named by the Prophet, who exprefsly calls him CYRUS; adding this high prophetic Commendation, "Thou art my Shepherd; he fhall perform all my defire, faying to Jerufalem, Thou fhalt be built up, and to the Temple, Thy Foundation fhall be furely laid."

Darius was fixty-two, when together with Cyrus his kinfman, he overthrew the Affyrian Monarchy, and conquered Babylon.

Daniel was at that time in Babylon, and he was not deprived of his honours. The two Kings intended him as their Viceroy, but his first appointment was one of the three Chief Rulers of the Empire, and three hundred and sixty inferior Governors were elected under them. After the Government had been thus settled and confirmed, Daniel was invited to Ecbatan, and prevailed upon to reside in the Court of Persia.

He was a man of most humane and tender feelings; after one of his Visions, he sunk under his grief and despondency, Daniel fainted and fell sick. After certain days (says he) I arose up, and returned to the King's business. His sickness was the natural effect of distress, on account of his Religion and his Country. He foresaw the future misery and sufferings of his nation, and he fainted, his countenance changed, he sickened from grief and anxiety. Such affectionate Representations, exhibit Daniel in a very pleasing and amiable light, and give an additional lustre and glory to his Character. He manifests the same publick spirit and love of his Country always, Amiable and God-like, no less eminent a Patriot and a Statesman, than a Prophet.

A Jewish Captive, thus torn in early life from his country, and Daniel had now been long in the highest Posts of Honour in a foreign service,
yet

yet he never once forgot his native home; his eyes were uplifted to heaven, his Soul poured out in prayer to God, and devout supplications for the Pardon, Prosperity, and Restoration of his Countrymen.

The distinguishing honours and partiality of his Sovereign, Daniel's own merit and amiable character, and the love and veneration of the people, all of them excited the envy of the Nobles, and the Persian Court. Under the pretence and sanction of Religion and Loyalty, they attempted a deep-laid Plot against the life of the Favourite. They assembled together in Council, and from thence went up, a numerous body, to the Palace. In the Eastern stile they all paid him homage—"King Darius Live for ever"—and carried up an Address to the King soon after his new accession. They dutifully requested him to issue by Proclamation, an order for a publick Rejoicing and Festivity for thirty days; during which time, they solicited his Majesty to forbid all, and every one of his subjects, in every part of his dominions, to ask any thing of the Gods, "save of thee, O King!" the Transgressor (be he who he may) should by the Decree be cast into the Lions Den, and there devoured. The King, on being told the Petition was offered up by a General Assembly of all his Nobles, the
 Presidents

Presidents and Rulers of his People, and knowing Daniel was one of the first in dignity, the King seemed fully persuaded of his being acquainted with it. Darius therefore, unwisely but innocently assented to his Peoples request. By a publick Edict, the King granted their Petition, and forwarded and proclaimed his orders throughout all Medea. His Majesty really believed it an honour his subjects, the Princes and Nobles of his Court, were conferring upon him, on his new acquisitions and accession.

In open Violation of this Law, which he had no fear of transgressing, Daniel was seen publicly worshipping God, at his chamber window, with his face towards Jerusalem. The Nobles and Rulers having thus gained their point, all met, and went up again in a body to the Palace, impeached Daniel of High Treason, in disobeying the royal Mandate. Darius now saw plainly their object and their malice, and that he had been unwarily deceived and ensnared. The Laws and Edicts of the Medes and Persians were irrevocable. The Nobles all assembled, they were waiting in the presence chamber, claiming sentence of judgment upon Daniel, and expecting the warrant for execution.

The King was all tears, full of grief and alarm, he was displeased with himself for listening to his flatterers, he laboured until sun set to rescue his

his favourite, and though compelled at last to give him up, Darius could not help indulging a secret hope, that Daniel's God would yet protect and preserve him. The King went out himself to meet him, to comfort Daniel and entreat him to submit with patience to so very hard a fate, and so unalterable a decree. The King accompanies him to the mouth of the Den, and would not part with him there, until after he had himself witnessed his being put in, taken an affectionate leave, saw the door fast shut, and affixed to it, his own seal, the royal signet of Medea. Darius then went home, but so full of grief he could neither eat, drink, nor sleep. Very early in the morning the King arose, and repaired immediately to the Den, found all his seals unbroken, he broke them all himself, and opened the door of the first entrance, in great anxiety between hope and despair, Darius called aloud on Daniel, "Is thy God able to deliver thee from the mouths of the Lions?" yes, O King! replies Daniel, my God hath sent his Angel, and held the Lions mouths. Darius overjoyed instantly ordered him out, and most graciously embraced Daniel. The Magistrates, and Nobles his accusers, obstinately persisted in asserting that the Lions had been satiated and over-fed and had on that account refused to devour Daniel. Upon this rumour the King com-
manded

manded a large portion of flesh to be thrown into the Den, and after the Lions had gorged their fill, he ordered his guard to thrust in the Rulers, Nobles and accusers of Daniel, and (conforming to the barbarity of the times) all their Wives, Children, and Families. The Lions as if almost famished, furiously fell upon them all and devoured them.

A new edict and proclamation was now issued out, and the King commanded all and every one of his subjects throughout all his Kingdom, to fall down and reverentially to worship the God of Daniel. And Daniel was more and more beloved, honoured and esteemed, the first favourite in the Court of Persia.

At Ecbatan the Metropolis of Persia, Daniel at his own expence erected a Tower of great magnificence and beauty, a Mausoleum for the Royal Family, it was a grateful tribute for the honours they had done him, and the custody of it was always entrusted to a Jewish Priest.

Advanced in years which he had spent in usefulness, devotedness to God, and the highest earthly honours, acquired and maintained in perilous and very critical times, under a variety of changes, from early life even to old age, and beyond

yond the seventy years captivity, full of days, piety and honours, Daniel died in the Palace of Shufhan, in the Capital of Persia, and he is said to be lain by himself in the Royal Sepulchre.

The History of the Prophet Daniel, commences from the first Capture of Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, at which time he was carried off with the young Princes, the beautiful and choicest youth, and flower of their Nobility. As he lived beyond the Captivity, in the very first year of the reign of Cyrus, Daniel warmly interested himself, and pointed out to that Prince all the Prophecies respecting the Jews; upon which, Cyrus immediately published an Edict § for their release, offering them all, and every one, the liberty of returning to their own country, to rebuild the City of Jerusalem and their Temple. Daniel after this prophesied the last and final Destruction of this so highly-favoured City, and the total extinction of the Jewish Commonwealth by the Romans.

The Stile of the Prophet Daniel is clear, concise, and pensive, yet flowing with all the ease of historical Narration; his Chronology is most exact, his Prophecies explicit, and very distinct as to order and time; they all depend on one ano-

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ther ; the easiest to be understood is the first, the Prophet has explained them himself, his meaning is most clearly expressed ; and after the first, in each succeeding one, something new is added.

Our Saviour himself quotes Daniel as a Prophet, and before the Jewish Doctors, who were always ready enough to cavil, and had a fair opportunity of disavowing the testimony. The exact accomplishment of his Prophecies, as well those which have been already fulfilled, as those which are now visibly fulfilling, attest the truth, and prove undeniably his Prophetic Knowledge and Veracity.

The first Chapters of the Book of Daniel, are historical. A relation of the King's Dreams—The ignorance of the Magicians—Sentence of death passed on them—Their escape—Daniel's Interpretations of the King's Dream, after he had informed him of what it was he dreamt—The King's astonishment, and Eastern modes of conferring Honours—Daniel's new dignities, and appointment to posts of honour in the Court of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar writes himself the fourth Chapter, tells his own story, relates his awful Dream, Daniel's Interpretation, the event which had so humiliatingly taken place, and its actual accom-

accomplishment. The King concludes, with a grateful commemoration of his Recovery, re-establishment in his Kingdom, and devout acknowledgment of God's Providence and Goodness. Some little time before his death, Nebuchadnezzar informed his Nobles of a Vision he had seen. A mule (he said) should come from out of Persia, and impose servitude upon Babylon, his Coadjutor should be a Mede, the boast of the Assyrians. Cyrus is believed to be that Mule, he was born of parents of different nations, the Mother the better, the Father the meaner; she was a Mede, and the daughter of a King, he a Persian, and subject to the Medes. The fifth Chapter contains a very interesting narrative; King Belshazzar's profane Feast, the awful Hand-writing on the wall, Daniel's wise and manly Reproof, his Speech and explanation of the Hand-writing, together with the sad and fatal History of its Accomplishment. A story so well told, almost makes you one of the Guests, and seats you in the Banqueting Hall. The simplicity with which this tragic scene is related, and with which it concludes, characterizes all the writings of the Sacred Historians.

“ In that night was Belshazzar the King of the
“ Chaldeans slain.”

The sixth Chapter is Daniel's own History, King Darius performs Belshazzar's promise and

A a a 2

appoints

appoints Daniel to the third post of honour in the Kingdom of Babylon. Next to the Blood Royal, the first was, General of the Army, the second, President of the Palace, the third, President of the land and Provinces. The History then records the Envy Daniel's high promotion excited; the ensnaring Petition of the Nobles; the Edict against Prayer; Daniel's Piety, his steady and virtuous perseverance; the execution of the cruel sentence, and God's merciful and miraculous rescue of his Prophet. After this, you read the King's anxiety, his checks of conscience, his early visit, at day-break, to the Lion's Den, his breaking the Seals, and the joy he expressed at Daniel's safety. Then follows the judgment pronounced on his Accusers, they were all thrown into the Lions Den, and (conforming to the arbitrary customs of the Tyrants of the East) their whole families, their innocent wives and children, were cast in with them.

The Chapter concludes, with a new Decree, in honour of the God of Daniel.

In Eastern pride, and magnificence, arrogating universality. King Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth. " I make a Decree, that men trem-
 " ble and fear before the God of Daniel; He
 " is the living God; his dominion shall be ever
 " to

“ to the end ; He hath delivered Daniel from
 “ the power of the Lions.”

The fix last Chapters are Prophecies. The Vision of wild Beasts, and the Throne of God. What was revealed to King Nebuchadnezzar respecting the four great Monarchies, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, is here again expressly told to Daniel, forty-eight years after. The representation of four fierce wild Beast, out of a stormy tempestuous sea, is emblematical of bloody wars and the commotions of the World. The Lion with Eagles wings (denoting its swiftness) and the others were Eastern Hieroglyphics and very usual figures on their monuments and Altars; and the Throne of God is a Metaphor borrowed from the awful Solemnities of a Court of Judicature, and taken from the grand Sanhedrim of the Jews. Thus far the Book is wrote in the Chaldee letter, henceforward Daniel writes in the Hebrew tongue.

The eighth Chapter relates a Vision five hundred and fifty-three years before Christ. The fate of Babylon was already known, and the Empire drawing towards its final conclusion. This Chapter relates the second vision, and what in a preceeding Vision was compared to a Bear, is here prefigured by a Ram, and the two horns repre-

represent the Empire of the Medes and Persians. The royal ensign of the Persians was always the Ram, and the He Goat the Arms of Macedon.

The ninth Chapter contains a Prayer for the Restoration of Israel, and the answer to the Prayer, by the Angel Gabriel, is esteemed the clearest Prophecy of the Messiah, in all the Books of the old Testament, and it exhibits the noblest, strongest, and most unequivocal proof of Christianity; it determines precisely the exact time of our Saviour's birth, his entry upon his Ministry—his being cut off, but not for himself—the destruction of the Jews which was to follow—their ceasing even to be a Nation—the new covenant and spread of the Gospel, in, and by the Messiah.

The three last Chapters relate a Vision two years after the former. In the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia, Daniel saw the Vision recorded in the tenth Chapter and he describes the effects it had upon him, together with the awful visit of Gabriel, the Angel sent from God to comfort him, at which time Daniel must have been upwards of ninety.

In the eleventh Chapter, the same times, and many of the same events are enumerated, as
were

were foretold by the Prophet Ezekiel, who was cotemporary with Daniel, and these are Prophecies which remain yet unfulfilled.

The predictions, are wonderful and told with elegant simplicity, they exhibit Daniel as a great and enlightened Prophet. Events, many of them actually accomplished, and others, as to time and manner and place so exactly foretold, have occasioned some (who study to resist their evidence) to represent them, as related subsequent to the transactions, which they so faithfully describe and prophetically record. They extend from the first establishment of the Persian Empire, five hundred and thirty years before Christ, through a long length of successive ages to the last and general Resurrection, when He, our Saviour and Lord, shall again appear—"To judge the World in Righteousness."

The Author of the Book of Ecclesiasticus is wholly silent, but Ezekiel repeatedly makes the most honourable mention of Daniel, extolling the piety and wisdom of this highly favoured Prophet.

Our Saviour, before the Jewish Teachers, expressly styles him Daniel the Prophet, and the Angel Gabriel when he delivered his Commission always addressed him as a MAN GREATLY BELOVED.

Daniel

Daniel penned his own Prophecies, he wrote a sad and mournful History of the sufferings and calamities of his Countrymen, many years before the events took place, and this Prophet signally names the Romans, as the future Conquerors, and final Destroyers of the City, the Temple and the Empire.



E S S A Y XXIX.

ON THE
BOOKS OF THE
T W E L V E
LESSER PROPHETS.

HOSEA.
JOEL.
AMOS.
OBADIAH.
JONAH.
MICAH.

NAHUM.
HABAKKUK.
ZEPHANIAH.
HAGGAI.
ZECHARIAH.
MALACHI.

VOL. II.

Bbb

HOSEA.

XIX

H O S E A.

THIS Prophet was the Son of Beerī, and the most ancient of them all except the Prophet Jonah.

Hosea prophesied in the reign of Jeroboam the second, and under the reigns of five succeeding Monarchs, and he lived in Samaria.

By reading the Prophecies, you will readily distinguish them to have been wrote under very different reigns; the three first Chapters, during the reign of Jeroboam the second; the fourth in the inter-regnum which succeeded it; a part of the fifth Chapter was wrote in the reign of Menahem, and all the remainder in the reigns of Pekah and Hoshea.

In one continued strain of invective, the Prophet declaims against the idolatry and sins of Israel; He exposes with a zealous warmth the impiety of Idol worship, the Gods erected at Bethel

and Bethhaven; calling loudly also on Judah to shun Offences so obnoxious, Pollutions so infamous and abominable. The Prophet Hosea, in poetic fiction, eloquently tells them, "They were sowing to the wind, and they should reap the whirlwind." Many of his Predictions are very awful warnings and severe threats; but Hosea, in others, highly consoles them, by foretelling the Restoration of his countrymen here, and a final Happiness hereafter. He prophesies of the calling of our Saviour out of Egypt; his Resurrection on the third Day; the amazing terror and consternation of a Judgment-day. Thus, amidst the denunciations of wrath, the Prophet revives them, by the dawn and expectation of Blessings yet in store; animates them by the glorious prospect and full assurance of a Ransom from the grave; a Redemption from death, in order to encourage them in the pursuit of righteousness, and engage them the worship of Jehovah.

The Prophet Hosea was a cotemporary with Amos and Joel; he maintained his dignity and high prophetic office almost ninety years; and there are many passages in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, which seem to have been borrowed from the Prophet Hosea. During the younger part of his life, under the reign of the Second Jeroboam, the people were very corrupt and Idolaters; persuasively

suasively the Prophet reasons, reproveth, and even threatens them; and as his life and usefulness were so long lengthened out, the Punishments he had foretold and threatened them with, and so very earnestly warned them against, were most of them inflicted; events, this pious and good man feelingly and very pathetically laments. Hosea had prophesied the Destruction of the ten Tribes of Israel; the city of Samaria, its capital, was besieged and taken in the days of the Prophet; Hosea was himself an eye-witness to it; the inhabitants were made captive, and the Prophet confined in a prison. These Prophecies were collected together, without Date or Divisions, they are Writings of very great Antiquity, and necessarily some of them obscure.

The style of Hosea is poetic, concise, and sententious, peculiar to himself, and to the age he lived in.

THE SECOND OF THE LESSER PROPHETS WAS,

J O E L.

THIS Prophet was the Son of Pethuel, and of the Tribe of Reuben; cotemporary with the Prophet Hosea, and a native of Beth-horon.

Joel zealously warm calls passionately on all his Countrymen to repent, but he intermixes with his threats most encouraging promises both of temporal blessings and celestial rewards, among the former he foretells the restoration of Israel, and he describes minutely the punishments which would hereafter be inflicted on its adversaries.

The Prophet earnestly presses upon them the use of proper means. " Sanctify a fast, call ye
" a solemn assembly, gather together the Elders,
" all the Inhabitants of the land, to the house of
" your

“ your God, and cry unto the Lord ;” again, and again in the second Chapter. “ Blow up the trumpet in Zion—Call an assembly—proclaim a solemn Fast—let the Ministers and Priests weep before the Altar, cry aloud to God, spare thy People, O God!” and Joel encourages them by the kindest promises, that the Lord will answer them, will save them, He will be jealous for his land, the Lord will pity his People.

Elegant and animated is the Style of the Prophet Joel, his two first Chapters perspicuous, sublime, highly descriptive and poetic, abounding with metaphors and beautiful allusions; the third which is the last Chapter foretells the judgments God was about to inflict upon the enemies of his People, and future blessings on the Church under the pleasing and poetic emblems of a Golden Age.

AMOS

A M O S.

THIS Prophet the third of the Lesser Prophets, was a Shepherd, and at fruit Season a gatherer of Sycamore fruit, at Tekoa, twelve miles south of Jerusalem.

Two years before the tremendous earthquake which happened in the year of the World three thousand two hundred and twenty-one and seven hundred and eighty-three years before the birth of our Saviour Amos began to prophesy, and in the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam the Second.

The Prophet's commission ran, to go and Prophesy concerning Syria, the Philistines, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab, but most expressly against Israel; the judgments the Prophet denounces are tremendous and full of horror, they threaten the total overthrow and destruction of those Kingdoms, and a little more than sixty
years

years afterwards, Samaria was besieged, its Capital taken, its Inhabitants carried away Captive, and as the Prophet Isaiah had foretold, Israel was broken from being any more a People.

The types and emblems of the Prophet Amos are suitably chose, highly fanciful and picturesque, under the figure and representation of Grass-hoppers, devouring the herbage and the fruit; a furious Fire ravaging all before it; a Plumbet-line; a tottering Wall in the moment of tumbling, and burying in its ruins all the Idol Gods of Israel.

An idolatrous Priest, named Amaziah, with malice and angry warmth, accused the Prophet Amos before the King, upon which he was commanded to leave the country. As the Prophet set out on his journey, he most strikingly addressed himself to Amaziah, and denounced this severe and very heavy judgment at parting; “Thy Wife shall become an open Prostitute; “thy Sons and thy Daughters slain, thou thyself “shall be carried Captive into a foreign land, “and thou shalt die there.” It was not very long after this very awful prediction, the Ten Tribes of Israel were all carried away Captive into Assyria.

Tekoa lay on the borders of a great wilderness, and the Prophet Amos drew many of his images and allusions from the fierce and terrific, wild and boisterous scenes of Nature, Lions and Beasts of prey, objects he was conversant with, sometimes pointing to awful signs in the Heavens, by all which he excited attention, and roused the most indolent; besides this the Prophet Amos addressed them with a manly eloquence, and with an affectionate tenderness he consoles Israel by adding, God will not utterly destroy his People, after cleansing and sifting them, a blessed dispensation would in time most certainly succeed, with security, abundance and peace.

The Prophet's whole composition is elegant, lofty and animated, although his life had been principally spent in rural occupations and a Cottage.

Chapters x. xi. xv.

THE

THE FOURTH OF THE LESSER PROPHETS IS,

O B A D I A H.

THE literal meaning of the name is a Servant of God. This Prophet's Nation, Tribe, Family, and place of abode are altogether unknown. Obadiah seems a cotemporary with the Prophet Jeremiah. and he prophesies the same events and denunciations against Edom, which Jeremiah had expressly foretold, Judgments which were all fulfilled. Obadiah's Prophecy is confined to only two subjects, and is contained in one single Chapter, very awful threatenings against Edom, and the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by the Assyrian Monarch.

The Chapter unfolds a very interesting scene, and it is a highly instructive lesson against ill-founded Exultation, and Human Confidence.

THE MOST ANCIENT OF ALL THE PROPHETS
WHO HAVE PUBLISHED THEIR PROPHE-
SIES, IS

J O N A H.

THIS Prophet is placed the fifth among the lesser Prophets, notwithstanding his being the most ancient of them all.

He is supposed to have prophesied in the latter end of the reign of Jehu, or the beginning of the reign of Jehoahaz, soon after Hazael, the Syrian Monarch, had so sorely oppressed Israel.

Jonah's Commission ran, "Go prophesy the Destruction of Nineveh." Instead of obeying, the Prophet purposely to avoid the Orders given him, set out a voyage a direct contrary way. A sudden most tremendous storm brought about his discovery. In order to allay the tempest, the mariners threw him over-board. The Providence of God so ordered it, a huge Whale swallowed

lowed up Jonah. In the immense belly of this Monster, the Prophet was safely lodged three days and three nights, and then disgorged upon the sands on the Sea shore.

A Miracle so astonishing, brought to mind the Prophet's disobedience, impressed him with a sense of his past danger, and the interposition of God in his wonderful escape. The Prophet undertook his journey now in right earnest.

Jonah was the son of Amittai, of the Tribe of Zebulon, and born in the city of Gath-hoper, in Galilee. It was here he received his awful Commission to go Envoy to Nineveh. At that time Nineveh was the Capital of all the East, the greatest City of the greatest Empire in the world, magnificently built on the Banks of the Tigris, Metropolis of Assyria.

Against this proud and lofty city, the Prophet denounced a heavy and most tremendous Judgment. In the midst of the high streets of Nineveh, Jonah opens his Commission, and delivers his awful Message to the inhabitants; and the Prophet assigns the reasons why he was sent; God had noticed their rapacity, cruelty, and oppression, their gross impiety and idolatry. Severe and signally terrifying were the Threatenings, awful the Denunciations he pronounced. It was sixty
miles

miles around the city walls, and three days journey across. On the evening of the first day, the Prophet began, and loudly uttered his very alarming Prophecy.—“ Yet forty days, and Nineveh will be destroyed.” —The striking solemnity with which the Prophet delivered his message, the highly interesting and important event it foretold, excited consternation and astonishment, and drew an immense crowd around him. Wonderful was the change the Prophet’s Message wrought on the inhabitants; awe and surprise led them to reflection, penitence, self-abasement; King and People humbled themselves before God; they put on sackcloth and ashes on their head, they cried right earnestly to God, on which the doom of Nineveh was delayed for a time.

Jonah’s Prophecy holds up to view a striking instance of God’s mercy to penitent and returning sinners; and the Prophet is a singular Type of our Saviour’s Burial and Resurrection, acknowledged and referred to by our Saviour himself.

Jonah would not believe so great a King, so immensely populous a city, would hearken to him, or mind any thing he had to say; but in case they should, they might seize and imprison or punish him; and suppose he should even
bring

bring about a Reformation, by repenting, they might avert the judgments he had uttered, and he might be condemned as a false Prophet. These suggestions puzzled Jonah, weakly solicitous for his own reputation, more than for the Glory of God, or the Preservation of a Kingdom. After a Miracle had convinced the Prophet, and set him on his work, and he had made some progress in it, Jonah grows passionate, betrays much impatience, and he will die. God condescends to reason with his Prophet, spares and pardons him, as well as Nineveh. This History is wonderful, the Prophet's character instructive and entertaining; a passionate fiery temper, but a good heart, very obstinate, but ingenuous, and open to conviction.

The Prophecy of Jonah is a plain, and simple narrative, except the Prophet's prayer, which forms a highly beautiful and very sublime Ode.

This is the first time we read of a Prophet sent to reform a Gentile Nation, and was surely a hopeful prelude to God's granting them, in some future time, repentance unto life.

Some disputes have arose respecting the Whale which swallowed up the Prophet, the Hebrew word signifies a large fish, and some years ago on the Coast of Portugal, a fish was caught by running ashore, in whose mouth when stretched, a Man could stand upright.

THE SIXTH OF THE LESSER PROPHETS, WAS

M I C A H.

AT a Village near the City Eleutheropolis, named Moraſti, in the Southern part of Judah lived the Prophet Micah, he propheſied under Jotham, and in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah, a cotemporary with Iſaiah, and a little before the Prophet Jeremiah who often and expreſsly quotes him.

The Prophet Micah's commiſſion ran, to go preach to the two Kingdoms of Judah and Iſrael, and he denounces very ſevere and heavy judgments on them both, and the Prophet executed his prophetic office with high animation and zeal. He foretold the invaſion of Iſrael and Judah by Shalmaneſer and Senna-Cherib, the Conqueſts and Triumph of both. The Captivities of Iſrael and Judah, and deliverance of the latter

latter; their dispersion; the cessation of Prophecy; the overthrow of Assyria; and Babylon, its proud and lofty Capital; the birth of our Saviour at Bethlehem Ephratah; exaltation of Christ's Kingdom; and the sad destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. This last prediction is said to have saved the life of the Prophet Jeremiah, for on boldly uttering this Prophecy, Jeremiah was imprisoned, condemned, and would have been put to death, had it not appeared the Prophet Micah had foretold the same event a hundred years before; highly eloquent is the Prophet's language; forcible, wise and comprehensive his reasoning. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!" And our Saviour condescends to adopt the language of this Prophet, in one of his conversations with his Disciples.

If you read over the History of Israel and Judah, from their first division, Israel's Revolt and Apostacy, and the History of Judah, under the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; the History of Israel, under the reigns of Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hosea; the discourses of the Prophet are wonderfully suited to the temper of these times, the disposition and

corruptions of the people he lived among. Under most of these reigns, the impiety, obstinacy, and wickedness here reprov'd and threatened by the Prophet, were prevalent; and it was during the life-time of Micah, that the judgments he had foretold, were many of them inflicted, and in the very manner the Prophet had described, with sword, pestilence, famine, dispersion, and captivity. Micah lived to see Israel made, as he had predicted, a Desolation and a Hissing; for the Prophet survived the ruins of this dead kingdom ten years. Judah's calamity, as surely, but more slowly, followed; within one hundred and thirty-three years, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, its numerous inhabitants, King and People, carried captive to Babylon.

In the fifth Chapter, you read a signal Prophecy, of the birth of our Saviour, together with the wide extended Spread of his kingdom. And in the sixth, a pathetic and highly animated controversy, exhibiting God's goodness, affectionately condescending to reason with his people, convince them of their ignorance, and reprove their injustice and idolatry. This Prophet concludes with the sweetest encouragement to his countrymen, amounting to a full assurance of mercy to the penitent, the protection and the blessing of
the

the Almighty. “ He will turn again, he will have
“ compassion on his People.”

The Prophet Micah's style is elegant and lofty,
and comes nearest to the style of Isaiah; concise
but comprehensive, highly animated and poetic.

THE SEVENTH OF THE LESSER PROPHETS, IS

N A H U M.

TH E name of this Prophet betokens Com-
fort; and it was very probably given him,
on account of the good tidings which he brought
to Judah. A total destruction of Nineveh, at
that time the Capital of Assyria, their very For-
midable Enemy.

Nahum was born in a small village in Galilee,
his family unknown; he preceded the Prophets
Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and prophesied about the

D d d 2

year

year of the world three thousand two hundred and eighty-three.

Nahum lived in the reign of Hezekiah, and about ninety years later than Jonah. He foretold the death of Senna-Cherib, the Assyrian Monarch, and with persuasive eloquence the Prophet calls loudly on Judah to repent. "Keep thy solemn Feasts, O Judah! perform thy vows! the wicked shall no more pass over thee, he is utterly cast off." Most tremendous and alarming the Prophet paints, and in glowing colours, the overthrow and destruction of Nineveh. She was then in all her glory and prosperity, the proudest, loftiest City in the world, the Court of the Assyrian Empire. The moment is strikingly marked for her ruin and abolition, sublimely and most awfully the Prophet announces it. "Jehovah himself proclaims Freedom to his people from the Assyrian yoke—announces Himself the ruin of the mighty City—Jehovah heads the armies marching to besiege it, striking them with terror and consternation—It is He delivers up the city, its inhabitants, its treasures, into the merciless hands of rapacious and insatiable plunderers." The Prophet next relates the vengeance of Jehovah; the instruments he makes use of; the Medes and Babylonians; their arms and dress; their approach to the walls; the inundation of the river; the capture

ture of Nineveh; the cries, lamentations, flight of its inhabitants; the amazing Terror of a City in the moment of destruction. “ Woe to the
 “ bloody city; I hear the crash of the whip, the
 “ rattling of the wheels, and the bounding of the
 “ chariots; I see the spear and the bright sword,
 “ the shield is all blood, the valiant are in scar-
 “ let” Full of majesty and grandeur is the style of the Prophet Nahum. “ The Lord (says he)
 “ hath his way in the whirlwind, and the clouds
 “ are the dust of his feet.” Thus awful and sublime is his language, and the Prophet confines himself almost wholly to this single event; except his appeal and exhortation to Judah, contained in one verse in the first Chapter, all the rest of the Prophecy, is one entire, beautiful Ode, full of fire, the boldest colouring, a most tremendous Revolution. The exordium on the Justice, Power, and Majesty of God, is a truth sublimely told and with Divine Magnificence.

About sixty years after this highly awful Prophecy, Nineveh was besieged, taken, and totally destroyed. In the second century afterwards, no traces of this proud City remained, and now its very Situation is unknown.

HABAKKUK.

H A B A K K U K. §

TH I S Prophet was the eighth of the lesser Prophets, and lived at the same period, and during the same reigns, as the Prophet Jeremiah. He foretels the Destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the Chaldæans.

The Prophet Habakkuk, when he came seriously to reflect and reason with himself on the Prophecies he had delivered, was wonderfully agitated and perplexed. He daily witnessed, and names often his surprize, at the seeming inequality in the ways of Providence, admitting the afflictions and sufferings of good men, and the not unfrequent prosperity of the wicked. The Chaldæans, he saw, so notorious for impiety, triumphed and trampled over Judah, a Nation and People so much more worthy than them; but the Prophet was afterwards commissioned to foretel that

§ Name a Wrestler or Grapler.

the

the Medes and Persians should, for the very same crimes, punish and be a severe scourge to the Chaldæans. Afterwhich, with steady faith, and fervent prayer, the Prophet Habakkuk addresses himself to God, gratefully recounting his many mercies, and faithfulness to his People, impressing it on their memories as a sure foundation of their hope, and a pattern for their practise under every distress, and the darkest dispensations of Providence. With all the enthusiasm and warmth of inspired piety, Habakkuk avowedly professes his reliance on Jehovah, a confidence which no future change, event, or circumstance, should ever shake or lessen.

By his Prophetic office Habakkuk was enabled, in the most striking manner, to describe the haughty prowess and grandeur of Assyria, their victories, fierceness and rapidity, and afterwards to contrast the scene, and represent their downfall and destruction. He expatiates on the pride of Chaldæa, its impiety, false confidence and idolatry, and prophesies the humiliation, sufferings and even the insanity of their haughty Monarch.

The third Chapter is a Song of sublimity and beauty, abounding with figures awfully descriptive; the Prophet concludes with a pleasing picture of domestic life, a pious good man consoling and enjoying himself in full assurance of Safety under the Divine Protection, even while
formidable

formidable Armies ravaged Judæa and laid waste all the land of Promise.

“ Although the fig tree shall not blossom,
 “ neither shall fruit be on the vines, the labour
 “ of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall
 “ yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from
 “ the fold, and there shall be no herd in the
 “ stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will
 “ joy in the God of my Salvation. The Lord
 “ God is my strength, he will make me to walk
 “ upon my high places.”

Z E P H A N I A H.

THIS Prophet was the last sent to Judah before the Captivity, and the ninth of the Lesser Prophets. Zephaniah was the Son of Cushi, and Grandson of Gedaliah, and he prophesied in the reign of King Josiah. He expressly foretold the Captivity of Judah, and
 names

names the Country to which they were all to be carried. With great zeal, and earnestness, the Prophet calls on Judah to repent; he is supposed to have been of the blood royal, and to have filled some high and very eminent Station; with dignity and authority Zephaniah reproves Princes, their Children, Nobles and Magistrates, reminding them of their duty, and noticing their sinful customs, fashions, and oppressions. Very wisely, and affectionately, the Prophet points out to them the sad example of many who have been ruined altogether by iniquities like theirs.

Zephaniah foretold the destruction of Nineveh, which fell out in the year of the world three thousand three hundred and ninety-two; and he prophesies the coming of the Messiah; the call of the Gentiles; that amidst all their troubles, now about to commence, their wasting wars, and heavy judgments, a Remnant should be always preserved. The Prophet enumerates the Judgments which were so soon to overtake them; they should go into captivity; be carried away to Babylon; after seventy years they should return, and be again re-established as a Nation and a People. He expatiates largely upon the promises made them, and the sure mercy of God to all the truly penitent; and then winds up his Prophecies, earnestly exhorting his countrymen to

thankfulness, a grateful remembrance of past mercies, and a firm reliance on God; although he is now angry with them for their sins, God will not be unmindful of his Covenant and his People.

The second chapter is a lively animated painting, and in glowing colours represents, the destruction of the Enemies of Judah, the Philistines, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia, and Assyria. The third, a heavy woe and very severe reproof to Jerusalem, and both Chapters abound with Figures highly elegant and sublime.

H A G G A I.

THIS Prophet was the first who was sent to Jerusalem, after the return of the Jews from their Captivity in Babylon,† and the tenth among the Lesser Prophets.

† 3484.

Haggai

Haggai was born in Babylon, the Prophet was sent from thence to Jerusalem, and his principal commission related to the Temple. As soon as he arrived, he waited upon the Governor and High Priest, and he addressed himself to all the people respecting it. The Building had been sixteen years begun, but it had long been put a total stop to, by the express orders of Cambyfes, a Son of Cyrus, who had obtained the Government under the title of Viceroy.

With the greatest earnestness and zeal, the Prophet stirred up both Magistrates and People, to set about the work with diligence and assiduity; on his pressing solicitations, and urging them so unweariedly on the business, the Jews pleaded their extreme poverty. The Prophet reprobates their excuses, and severely upbraids them with ingratitude to God; and afterwards to encourage them, Haggai gave them new assurances and promises of the Divine protection and blessing; they should immediately experience a wonderful increase in their cattle, in their pasturage, on their vines and olives, of their gold and silver, an increase which would henceforward always keep pace with their industry and labour.

After this, the Prophet goes on to give them a much higher encouragement still; he inspires them with foretelling the great and signal blessing

and glory of this their second Temple; it would astonishingly exceed the former; for their long-expected, much wished for, and ever blessed and glorious Messiah, should make his personal appearance in it. And while this second Temple stood, our Saviour actually did appear; he was presented in it by his parents; acknowledged publicly by Simeon and Anna; afterwards he taught therein, and by his gracious Presence, filled that House with Glory; with the Glory of God, manifested in the most illustrious Miracles; with the glorious tidings of Salvation, of Grace, of Righteousness, and Truth. The work went on now rapidly and cheerfully, under the watchful eye and daily attendance of the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah.

Some envious and very powerful opponents had set themselves against this business, and they forwarded an embassy to Persia, presented a Petition and Address to Darius, at Shushan, requesting him to lay new prohibitions, and use his royal authority to put a stop to all further progress in the building. Instead of granting their Petition, Darius sent back by the Ambassadors, a confirmation and enlargement of their Charters, and of all the privileges which had been granted them by Cyrus; and the King annexed to them heavy penalties, on all and every one, who should
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in future be accused and convicted of giving any hindrance whatever to the finishing of the Temple. In four years time, the whole Building was completed, and the solemn Feast of Dedication was at that time celebrated in it.

The Prophet Haggai closes his Prophecies, with many predictions which refer to Wars and Seditions among the Gentile Nations, tending to the overthrow of the enemies of the Jews. He died in Jerusalem, and as he was of the Sacerdotal race, they interred him in a select ground, which had been allotted as a burial place to the Priests.

Z E C H A R I A H.

THIS Prophet was the son of Barachiah, of the Sacerdotal race, the grandson of Iddo, and the eleventh among the Lesser Prophets: He was a cotemporary with the Prophet Haggai, and prophesied only two months after him. Zechariah was the second Prophet sent by
God

God to the returned captives at Jerusalem. He was commissioned as well as Haggai, to press upon the Jews the building of the Temple. This Prophet reveals expressly, and more fully the Revolutions and Events which were now about to take place, even to the close and final dissolution of the Empire, their subjection and captivity to the Romans.

Among the Lesser Prophets, Zechariah has a high pre-eminence for the number, excellence, and preciseness of his Prophecies. In the plainest and most exact manner, he foretells the coming of the Messiah; his rejection by the Jews; the wars and bloody persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes; their wars with the Romans. He prophesies the death of Christ; and under the emblem of a shepherd, represents his sheep as scattered. He next foretells the annulling of the Law of Moses, and the new Covenant of Grace instituted by Jesus Christ; particularizes our Saviour's lowly entrance into Jerusalem upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass; and the thirty pieces of silver, the price paid to Judas Iscariot; also the Siege of Babylon by Darius; and it was on this very Prophecy, those Jews, who had continued in Babylon, availing themselves of this information, took timely warning, and quit-
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ted the city before the combined armies had surrounded it.

The Prophet Zephaniah expatiates on the glorious Spread of Christianity, by the admission and conversion of the Gentiles. He foretells the persecutions and sufferings of the Christians, and names the punishment their persecutors would infallibly bring upon themselves.

Together with the Revolutions and Changes of the Jewish Empire, many of these Prophecies have a reference to the Empires of Persia, Greece and Rome.

The twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth Chapters, constitute one single distinct Prophecy respecting the Christian Dispensation. They inform you of some signal victories over the enemies of Jerusalem; of the restoration and conversion of the Jews; of their bitter remorse and compunction for having pierced the Messiah; their admission by baptism into the privileges of the Gospel Covenant; and of their deliverance from false Prophets; the dispersion of Christ's Disciples; and preservation of a small remainder; the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; the final triumph and glorious establishment of the Kingdom of Christ; all these the Prophet particularizes with great clearness, his style is plaintive and it is said by
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the Jews, the spirit of the Prophet Jeremiah had passed on Zechariah. Throughout the Prophecies of this book there is a pleasing transition from one to another, a happy union and blending of present with future scenes, a regularity and wise connection peculiar to the writings of this Prophet.

M A L A C H I.

THE name signifies an Angel. The Prophet Malachi appeared in the latter part of the life-time of the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah, when Nehemiah was Governor, and so piously and usefully employed himself in re-building the walls of Jerusalem.

Malachi was the last Prophet sent to the Jews, all Prophecy now ceased; Malachi is therefore expressly called, the Seal of Prophecy; a wise appointment this, of the providence of God in order more conspicuously to display the coming of the Messiah, the blessing all were looking up to

to with earnest expectation. This happy event the Prophet most expressly foretels, he describes the person of John the Baptist, his forerunner and messenger, preparing the way for the Messiah, disposing the minds of the People to receive him, and after that, his appearance; his office; his dignity and many signal features of his life.

At this time the Temple was built, and although so very lately completed, its services were already abused and shamefully neglected. The Prophet Malachi severely reproves them for their profanation of it. He informs them of the change, which would take place in the law, at the appearance of the Messiah, the great Prophet himself; and he directed and instructed all his countrymen to expect no other Prophet, before he himself should come, except John the Baptist, his immediate forerunner, a Prophet honored and signally distinguished by our Saviour, even as more than a Prophet.

Though the Prophet Malachi followed so close after the other Prophets, even in the life-time of Haggai and Zechariah, impiety and vice had made a sad progress; both Priests and People were guilty of shameful and most enormous

crimes, Sabbath-breaking, Adultery, casting off the Law, or what was even worse, a wresting it to their sinful practices; denying God's Providence, and abandoning his worship. On a review of such conduct and impiety, the wisdom and suitableness of the Prophet's mode of reclaiming and reproving them, is peculiarly seen. He first impresses on their minds the coming of the Messiah; and then describes his employment under the emblem of a Refiner or Purifier. "He shall appear as a Refiner's fire, and like Fuller's Soap. He shall sit as a Purifier of silver." And his Argument, and way of reasoning with the Priests, is affectionately influential and elegant. "A Son honoreth his Father, and a Servant his Master; if then I be a Father, where is mine honour? and if I be a Master, where is my fear?" saith the Lord of Hosts.

The Prophecies and Preaching of Malachi, are directed to rectify all such vile abuses, which had disgraced the Jewish Worship, and crept into the Commonwealth; and many of the crimes and enormities so zealously and severely reprov'd, were afterwards very much reformed by Nehemiah, on his return the last time from the court of Persia, when he prevented the Tyrians from trafficking on the Sabbath, by shutting up the City Gates

Gates from sun-set on Friday, until the Sabbath was over, and this wise Governor severely reprov-
ed the Magistrates for neglect of duty, and stren-
uously enforced the observance of the Laws
throughout the Kingdom.



E S S A Y XXX.

A S U M M A R Y

O F T H E

H I S T O R Y

B Y W A Y O F

C O N C L U S I O N.

THE first volume ever wrote opens with the Formation of a World. The revolution of the earth on its own axis—The first day, and the first night. “And God said, let there be light and there was light.” The Sun’s Majesty and burst of glory on its entrance, its meridian lustre, and

and the serene and milder beauties of the Moon. The elevation of the air, and its suspension, constituting an atmosphere. The luxuriancy and elegance with which the earth was cloathed. The introduction of birds and beasts; and last of all, of a rational being into it. And Man walked forth, Vicegerent of the Almighty, as its Governor and Lord. Adam receives his benediction from God, and the Heavenly Host stood gazing with wonder at this new accession to Creation. The Social alliance now formed for Adam. his burst of joy, his happy Marriage, and Adam declared her the dear Companion of his life. Seven years they reigned in Paradise, and you read here of the daily duties and employments allotted them. Then follows their Disobedience their awful Summons, Trial, Sentence announced, their Punishment, expulsion from all the happy interviews and presence of their God, and from the Garden of Eden.

The History soon relates the progress of vice and impiety.

Two young men, brothers, the one virtuous, the other wicked—Cain murders his Brother for his piety, and the murderer is permitted to live. A demonstration, and perhaps the first proof of a future state.

From

From the Scriptures we learn, the Birth and commencement of early Ages; Mankind in infancy; Societies yet forming; Men in tents, and scattered tribes; Order and Civilization in their rude beginnings; the invention of Arts and Sciences; the literary character of Enoch, his piety and distinguished reward, modestly and so simply related by his Historian:

“ Enoch walked with God, and he was not.”

Then follows the rapid Torrent and amazing Overflow of vice and impiety, of error, superstition, and idolatry, abominations productive of utter destruction, the total extirpation of a world, Noah only excepted. Noah alone found favour with God, and was miraculously preserved with his family.

The Story of ABRAHAM, a lineal descendant, called a grandson of Noah's, the Heir of a new world, and the Friend of God, is wonderfully interesting; and the Scriptures now tell us, God chose his children, the children of Israel his son, as he had promised Abraham, to be his peculiar people; that he miraculously rescued them from slavery and bondage under Pharaoh, King of Egypt; and to give an astonishing proof of his patronage and power, he designedly led them out by the way of the Red Sea, opened a passage for his People in the deep, leading them through as
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on dry land to the Wilderness of Etham, and drowning an Egyptian Prince, and his mighty Host pursuing them.

By a mixture of tenderness and severity, how he trained them up near forty years, wanderers in the Wilderness, feeding and cloathing, instructing and reproving them, and at last conducting them safely to the Banks of Jordan, where he again opened a passage of no less than fifteen miles in width, for them and their cattle, and put them into the quiet possession of a most fruitful and delightful country.

It records the many wonders God had wrought for their preservation, and his choice of Moses, his awful interview, election and establishment, together with the wise precepts God was pleased to deliver his people by that divine Lawgiver. A Code of Laws, civil and religious, which were ever after the standing municipal Laws of the Israelites, by which they were governed, and necessarily separated from every other Nation and Kingdom.

The Scriptures informs us God was himself their Judge, Lawgiver and King, and the High-Priest his Minister. He formed their Polity and was himself their Commander. He issued out his orders and rules of war. He led their Armies. He fought their battles. The Lord of their
Hosts,

Hoſts. The God of the Armies of Iſrael. He gave them evident ſigns of his Preſence in the Tabernacle and Temple, anſwering them when they conſulted him; making them prosperous, when they ſerved him; correcting them by temporal calamities, when they forſook him; and receiving them into his favour and protection on repentance and amendment.

For the Space of four hundred years God thus ſignally preſided over Iſrael, of all Governments by far the happieſt and moſt enviable. As a further demonſtration of his wiſdom and power, God then raiſed up a regular ſucceſſion of Prophets, in number forty-ſeven and ſix Prophetesses. " This light ſhining in a dark place," continued a thouſand years. The lives of the Prophets, their characters, miniſtry and predictions form a curious, intereſting, highly awful and inſtructive part of the Jewiſh Hiſtory; drawing away the veil from futurity; with preciſion recording the Tranſactions of ages yet unborn; minutely and clearly holding up to view Events in the boſom of futurity; ſpeaking of them as now preſent and tranſacting; repreſenting events at a diſtance with ſuch certainty, as if they had been eye-witneſſes to their actual accompliſhment. Thus their meſſages were often tremendous and awful, as well as conſolatory, warning, threatening,

threatening, instructing and exhorting all. The Prophets were God-like and exalted characters, consulted upon all emergencies, the venerable and acknowledged oracles of their Country.

The Hebrew Republic is almost one continued record of Prophecy. Centuries before their birth, God calling forth by name the Dispensers of his Mercies, or the future Instruments of his Vengeance.

The first Prophet, and the first Jewish Chief, invested with supreme authority, was MOSES, a Man greatly honoured and revered, whom God knew face to face, a Divine Lawgiver, inspired with patriotic zeal, and the most ardent love for his People.

MOSES was born in the year of the world two thousand four hundred and thirty-two, and died at the age of one hundred and twenty. Under the title of Head Leader and Chief, MOSES reigned over Israel forty years.

At the appointment of God, JOSHUA was by sound of trumpet proclaimed throughout the camp, his successor. Joshua entered Canaan, valiantly fought many famous battles; subdued the Canaanites. At the exterminating sword of Joshua, the inhabitants fled; in about six years, he acquired possession of their towns, fortified ci-

ties, and much of the country, and divided it among the twelve Tribes by lot.

Joshua maintained his Dignity, Head, Leader, and Chief over Israel, five and twenty years, and died at the age of one hundred and ten.

After the death of Joshua, each Tribe elected its own General, and they were governed by their Elders; but some eminent characters, Champions and Deliverers of Israel, God from time to time raised up, and they were invested with the authority under the title of Judges.

The JUDGES were extraordinary Magistrates, they sat as President in the Jewish Sanhedrim, were General Officers in the field, announced the Law, and regulated Divine Worship. A Succession of Fourteen maintained the dignity two hundred and fifty years; but at different periods, more than a hundred years of servitude and bondage intervened, the Israelites being repeatedly conquered by the Philistines, became tributary to them, and to the five other neighbouring Nations around them.

Samuel, the Prophet, was the last Judge of Israel. After Samuel had, with true dignity and pious zeal, unweariedly governed his People twenty years, rescued them from slavery, and advanced them to honour and respectability, the
Rulers

Rulers and Magistrates, the Heads and Elders tumultuously assembled, and having in view the many lucrative titles, honours, posts, and luxuries of a Court, demanded of Samuel to elect them a King. The Prophet's affectionate Speech and wise Remonstrance being rejected, at the appointment of God, Saul, the Son of Kish, a Benjamite, a tall and very beautiful youth, was anointed by Samuel, King over Israel. SAUL was a brave and gallant Officer, and David celebrates him for his warlike prowess, and many signal victories; but ambition and jealousy sorely disgraced his character, and stained it with many odious blemishes. After a total defeat and most bloody slaughter, in a conflict with the Philistines, Saul, together with three of his brave Sons, Jonathan, Aminadab, and Malchishua died gloriously fighting for their country. The Philistines, as an honourable trophy, hung up their armour in the house of Ashtaroth, and exposed their mangled bodies on the walls of Beth-shan.

The Death of Saul opened for David a fair and very natural road to the Throne of Israel.

DAVID was proclaimed at Hebron, then the capital of Judah, and the two Tribes of Judah and Benjamin all came and paid him homage. At the same time, Ishbosheth, a Son of Saul's, was

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proclaimed

proclaimed at Mehanaim, by Abner, his Father's Commander in Chief.

The Kingdom of Israel remained thus divided seven years; Ishbosheth was then murdered by Baanah and Rechab, the two Captains of his guard, in whom he placed his greatest confidence, and his head was brought by them to Hebron, and presented to David.—“ My Lord, O King, behold the head of Ishbosheth, the Son of Saul, thine enemy! The Lord hath avenged my Lord the King, this day, of Saul, and of his seed.

On this event, the twelve tribes assembled, took the oath of allegiance to David, and anointed him King over all Israel.

David reigned forty years, and full of days, riches, and honours, this highly-favoured Prince, a Prophet and King of Israel, died at the age of seventy. A few days before his death, the good old King blew the trumpets, and convened a general meeting of all his people, their Elders and Heads, his Nobles, Officers of State, together with the Priests and Levites, and with royal munificence, ordered a thousand bullocks to be added to the daily sacrifice, and feasted all his People. At this convention, Solomon his Son was seated on the Throne of Israel, and the Government was so wisely planned, and so securely established,

established, as to produce forty years uninterrupted prosperity and peace.

SOLOMON was at the age of eighteen, when he ascended the Throne of his Father; and this young Prince, soon after, exhibited all the magnificence and glory of sublunary greatness, amiable, wise and good, divinely educated by a Prophet, and having witnessed all his life, the pious Administration and good Government of the King, and the regular and devout exercises of a religious Court, he shone the wisest, grandest, and most powerful Monarch of the East, as well as the richest and most exalted.

Solomon died at the age of fifty-eight, and although he had a thousand wives and concubines, Solomon left only one Son, REHOBAM, and he at the age of forty.

After Solomon's death, Rehoboam assembled all his people, but a Revolution at this time took place. Ten of the twelve Tribes elected Jeroboam, a spirited, brave, and gallant Officer, who had been long watching a favourable opportunity to gratify an Ambition, the Prophet Ahijah had once so unexpectedly raised.

Rehoboam was styled King of Judah, and Jeroboam assumed the title of King of Israel, Throughout the Jewish History, the two Kingdoms

doms remained thus divided; and there are recorded the reigns of twenty successive Kings over Judah, and nineteen who reigned over Israel.

HOSHEA was the last King who sat on the Israelitish Throne; and in the ninth year of the reign of Hoshea, and in the year of the world three thousand two hundred and eighty-three, King and People were carried away captive; Samaria, the capital, laid in rubbish; the whole country laid waste; the inhabitants widely dispersed; many of them were drove to the desolate frontiers of Halah and Habor, and some to Nineveh and Medea. Thus forlorn and widely scattered, the Israelites, in a foreign land, among Tyrants and Strangers, were condemned to end their days in obscurity and bondage.

The Court of Assyria was now removed to Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar, uniting together the inhabitants of such nations as he had conquered, a strange medley of Religions and People, he gave them Samaria, and all the cities of Israel, where the ten Tribes had dwelt; and he brought them from Babylon, from Cuthah, and Ava, from Hamath and Sepharvaim. As to the Israelites, after their dispersion and captivity, their very name was lost.

Israel

Israel had stood a separate Kingdom from Judah two hundred and fifty-six years; and one hundred and thirty years after, the Kingdom of Judah also ended as a Monarchy, with the seventy years captivity in Babylon, in the year of the world three thousand four hundred and thirteen. After a close siege of two years and a half, at which time the Scarcity had produced both a Famine and a Pestilence in the city, Nebuchadnezzar stormed and at length made a breach in this almost impregnable Fort, this strong Hold of Sion, entered Jerusalem with his army, sacked and plundered the Temple, the royal Palaces, the Treasury, the Palaces of all the Nobles, and the whole City; after which he burned them all to the ground, laid waste the country, drove out all its wretched inhabitants, and by far the greater part he led away captive to Babylon.

At the end of seventy years, and in the first year of the reign of Cyrus, the Prophet Daniel, Privy Counsellor and Lord Chamberlain in the Court of Persia, presented a Petition to the King, and laid before his Majesty all the Prophecies respecting the captive Jews. Cyrus was that amiable Prince who had been prophesied of, by name, two hundred years before his birth, and he had lately added to his conquests Babylon, the proudest city in the universe, slain Belshazzar,
the

the reigning King, and put an end to the Assyrian empire. The Prince readily listened to the representation of Daniel, whose many virtues had now advanced him to the highest honours, and he issued out a royal Edict throughout Babylon, in favour of all the Jews, granting to as many as chose, free liberty of returning home; to take possession of their former estates, and rebuild their City and Temple. The King made them a royal present, a liberal supply of necessaries, and all the magnificent vessels belonging to their former Temple, which had been brought away from Jerusalem. Judæa had already lain desolate and fallow two and fifty years; and many of those Jews who accepted his Majesty's offer, and returned back, busily employed themselves in seeking out their family estates, fencing their grounds, cultivating their lands, and rebuilding their houses. Zerubbabel, a Prince of the blood royal, Jeshua the High Priest, some few of the Heads and Elders, a numerous body of Priests and Levites, proceeded on to Mount Moriah, and witnessed the sad ruins of both City and Temple. They here formed a Council, and consulted on the best measures for putting in execution the Commission they had brought from Persia, and settling an establishment of the Jewish affairs, both in Church and State.

A little

A little more than seventy years after their return, as anarchy and much distraction prevailed amongst all ranks and orders of people, and their Religion totally neglected, in so much, that even the service of the Temple had long been laid aside, Ezra, a learned Jew, of the house of Aaron, obtained an appointment from the Court of Persia, and he set out from Babylon, accompanied by a smaller body of his countrymen, and the new Viceroy and his party arrived safe at Jerusalem.

Ezra was introduced to the Governor, an assembly of the Heads and Elders were convened, before which his credentials were opened, and Ezra formally invested with his dignity, his new powers, and authority. This pious and good man governed them under Persia thirteen years; but notwithstanding his amiable example, and zealous endeavours to promote religious order and subordination, riot, discord and confusion prevailed throughout Judea, and the city walls were as yet in ruins; upon which Nehemiah, by the influence of Queen Esther, was sent from Shushan, with express orders to rebuild them, and he brought with him a fresh Commission, which was the third from the Court of Persia.

After the establishment of the new Viceroy, with true patriotism and unaffected humility,

Ezra accepted of a subordinate station. He now busied himself in collecting copies of the Sacred Canon, and ever afterwards sat as President in the Sanhedrim, the Grand Council of the Jewish Nation.

The new Governor unweariedly employed himself in carrying on the Reform both of Church and State, with zeal and earnestness, correcting the many disorders and abuses which had crept into both. With diligence and wonderful alacrity, this patriotic and disinterested Statesman strenuously exerted himself in rebuilding the city walls. For this purpose, he engaged a great number of workmen, presided over them all day himself, and in two and fifty days, Nehemiah repaired and fortified them all round the city. With the most spirited liberality, he presided over the Jews twelve years, and during his whole Viceroyship, he levied no Tax, exacted no Tribute, kept a princely table, a train of servants and splendid equipages, all at his own expence.

Nehemiah was the last Governor sent from the Court of Persia. After his return to Shushan, Judæa was added to the Prefecture of Syria, and the Jews became subjects to the reigning monarchs of that Empire. The High Priest, for the
time

time being, was vested with the supreme authority of Church and State. His Powers and Commission were granted him from Syria, and the Jews now paid a yearly tribute to that Kingdom.

Judæa was situated between Egypt and Syria, and the Jews became, at different times, tributaries, and under subjection to both. Ptolemy, King of Egypt, marched a powerful army into Judæa; he made himself Master of Jerusalem, and led away captive one hundred thousand Jews. Judæa remained in bondage to Egypt five years, at which time Syria recovered her Sovereignty. Antiochus, the King, imposed on them a yearly tax, but he contented himself with this token of submission, and as long as this Prince lived, he ever afterwards granted the Jews many favours, and acts of kindness and friendship.

At this period, Judæa recovered much of its splendor and prosperity, enjoyed a profound peace, and preserved a strict adherence to her Religion and Laws.

Antiochus was succeeded in his Government by his son Seleucus; and at the death of Seleucus, Antiochus Epiphanes ascended the Throne of Syria. Disappointed on finding his Coffers

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and

and Treasury quite empty, and his country sadly impoverished and exhausted, this young Prince was involved in many difficulties. Jason, a brother of the High Priest, availed himself of the necessities of Syria; he repaired to Antioch, obtained an audience, and made his Majesty an offer of three hundred talents for the High-Priesthood and Government of Judæa. Antiochus accepted his offer, directed his Secretary to make out his Commission; and Jason returned with full powers to Jerusalem. Onias, their present High-Priest, an amiable and worthy Prince, who had religiously executed the Holy Function, and maintained the Government four and twenty years, was deposed, and even banished the country, on purpose to make room for Jason. Three years after this, Menelaus, another brother of the High-Priest, when he was sent to the Court of Syria, to pay the yearly tribute, Menelaus treacherously treated with the King for the Priesthood and Government of Judæa, and offered Antiochus three hundred talents more than had been given him by Jason. The Syrian Prince made no scruple whatever of closing in with this new proposal also; he called again for his Secretary, and ordered him to draw out a fresh commission for Menelaus; with which he returned to Jerusalem, summoned a Council, and opened

ed before them his credentials and new authorities from Syria.

Aided by his Party, Menelaus assumed the Reins of Government, and the dignity of the High-Priesthood; but by every means and art he could devise, by fines and taxes, melting down his 'own plate, and much of the Publick's, together with some of the sacred vessels belonging to the Temple, Menelaus was not able to raise the Purchase-money, he by solemn oath had promised Syria. On this demur, all was riot and confusion in the city. Jason, ever watchful, availed himself of the moment, with a bold and resolute band of his enraged and disappointed party, he fled in haste to Jerusalem; by friends and bribes, Jason gained admittance at the city gates, and drove Menelaus and his Courtiers, and all his guards, into the Citadel, butchering all and every one who opposed them. While sword in hand, Jason and his desperate men were resolutely fighting their way, and bravely standing their ground, Antiochus marched a powerful army into Judæa, and approached Jerusalem. In the midst of his triumph, Jason, with his bold and riotous party, were compelled to fly for their lives, and they hastily quitted the country, together with every sanguine hope of Royalty and Re-establishment. The Magistrates terrified and alarmed as the Syrians approached, at first shut

up

up the city gates; Antiochus battered them down, stormed Jerusalem, and marched his army through the high streets to the Citadel, savagely butchering in his way no less than forty thousand Jews. The King commanded Menelaus, the High Priest, to follow him; and then, encompassed by his guard and general Officers, he entered the Temple, and (what a pious Jew shuddered at) even the Holy of Holies. In sacrilegious and wanton impiety, he thus blasphemed and violated the Jewish Laws; and to add to his cruelty, Antiochus ordered in a Hog, scattered its blood over all the Temple, and laid the carcase on the brazen Altar of Burnt-offerings. With such abominations, he polluted the Sanctuary, and abolished its services. The King carried off the golden Altar of Incense, the Shewbread Table, the golden Candlestick, vessels, utensils, and donatives, to the value of eighteen hundred talents of gold, and brought them all to Antioch, together with the rich spoils, and all the plunder of Judæa and Jerusalem.

On his return home the Syrian Prince issued out his Royal Edict, forbidding, throughout his Dominions, all Religious Worship whatever, except the Idolatrous Worship, to the Heathen God, he had himself set up. The King's Edict extended to Judæa, and was obviously levelled against

against the Jews. All Worship to the God of Israel ceased. The Temple was polluted with human blood, and the filthiest Abominations; their Sabbaths forbid; their Fasts and Feasts profaned; their Law abolished; and the observance of a Jewish right punished with death. Antiochus caused the Statue of Jupiter to be set up, on the Brazen Altar of Burnt-Offerings, and Idols were publickly worshipped in their Synagogues. The pious Jew, reverencing his own Laws, and zealously attached to his Religion, grew riotous and distracted, a general massacre soon took place, and such of them as were happy enough to escape alive, hid themselves in Caverns and Holds among the craggy Rocks, secreted what little property they could, and lived here, on roots and wild herbs, to avoid Death, or (what they thought a still greater evil) Apostacy.

Historians, sacred and profane, faithfully record, that during these persecutions, and for forty days, Judæa was suffering under terrifying and alarming Appearances in the Sky; tremendous Lights, resembling Warriors in Armour; fierce Conflicts; Armies in Battle Array; Clashing of Swords, Lances and Shields; Martial Clangors; the Horrors and the Din of War.

In presence of this bloody Prince, and to satiate his revenge, at the age of ninety, good
Eleazar

Eleazar, a venerable Priest, was led forth to the butchering Scaffold, and after the most shameful and lawless insult, in open defiance of humanity, suffered all the tortures of Martyrdom. And the Seven Brothers inspired with holy ardour and religious zeal, together with their Heroic Mother, mangled and bleeding, exhibited each, a new and ghastly scene of horror, tragically to feast the savage Fury and glut the hellish Madness of the Tyrant.

Disgraced and thus polluted, Jerusalem and the Temple was deserted four years; but at length, from these sad scenes of Idolatry, bloodshed and distraction, a Family of great piety, bravery, and zeal for God, rescued them. Mattathias, the Father, and his virtuous and inspired Sons, with undaunted courage and intrepidity, hazarded their lives in the glorious Opposition, and just at the moment of declaring it, seeing a Jew presenting himself at the Heathen Altar and worshipping an Idol, Mattathias ran up to the Apostate and slew him; his brave Sons now fired with the same spirit, instantly stabbed the Officer and his Guard of Syrian Soldiers, overthrew the Altar, and felled the Image to the ground. Mattathias and his Family, and all such who dared to join him, fled away to the Mountains, there formed a Community, and enlisted a little Army, spirited, resolute, and bold.

These

These were the Asmoneans, the virtuous and patriotic Restorers of the Jewish Law, their Religion and Liberties, and the History of them forms an interesting and reviving Period, the Sons were invested with the Dignity of the High-Priesthood, and were all of them Sovereign Princes, distinguished for Piety, Magnanimity, and Valour.

These celebrated Heroes, this one virtuous Family, together with its Descendants, reigned over the Jews one hundred and twenty-six years, and carry on the History to the reign of Herod, forty years before the birth of our Saviour.

Antipater, the father of Herod, had with much cunning signally distinguished himself by assisting the Roman arms, and particularly that part of their army stationed in Judæa. The Generals, in all their letters to the Senate, passed high encomiums on the Jewish Commander, ascribing their victories and success to his good conduct, information, and bravery; upon which Cæsar invested Antipater with the honours and privileges of a Roman citizen, and appointed him Lieutenant and Procurator of Judæa. Cæsar also advanced his son Herod to the Tetrarchy of Galilee, and added to it a post of high Dignity in Cæle-Syria, and a promise of the Government of Judæa.

Not long after these honours had been conferred on Antipater and his son Herod, a quarrel arose between the partisans of Mark Antony and Octavianus, which was put a final stop to, by Mark Antony's marriage with Octavia. Just at this time, Judæa became a scene of bloodshed and distraction. Pacorus, Prince of Parthia, entered into a convention with Antigonus, a younger son of Aristobulus, who was then in Arms, and contending for the Jewish Crown. Pacorus marched a powerful army into Judæa, and encamped before Jerusalem; the Parthian army was joined by Antigonus and his party. By bribes, treachery, and force of arms, the allied armies became Masters of Jerusalem. Hyrcan, the High Priest, and Phasaël, a brother of Herod, they put in irons, and plundered their Palaces and the Temple. Herod was at this time in Jerusalem, but to avoid falling into the hands of the Conqueror, at dead of night, he, his Mother, his sister Salome, his brother Joseph, and all his family, stole out, and made the best of their Way to Massada, took possession of this strong Hold, the most impregnable Fortress in the Kingdom; there he secured his treasures, and placed his family, giving the command of it to his brother Joseph, supplying him with ammunition and implements of war, and he left
with

with him eight hundred men to defend the Castle; after which, Herod, together with his soldiery, all fled away to Petra, the capital of Arabia. Malchus, the reigning Prince, refused affording him either shelter or assistance; upon which, Herod dismissed a great part of his retinue, and hastened on with the remainder to Egypt. From Rhinocorura, he proceeded to Pelusium, and thence to Alexandria, where he embarked on board a vessel, and sailed by the way of Rhodes and Brandusium for Rome.

Herod was graciously received by Mark Antony and Octavianus, and at a meeting of the Senate, purposely convened, he was unanimously elected to the Sovereignty of Judæa. Herod, King of Judæa, between Mark Antony and Octavianus, followed by the Tribunes, Consuls, and Senators of Rome, was in royal pomp conducted to the Palace, and feasted with great elegance and hospitality.

Herod reigned thirty-seven years, and died at the age of seventy, dreaded, abhorred, and despised. He had long lain languishing under the stench and corroding waste of a most loathsome disease, and the stings and far severer tortures of despair. "Senseless to Pains of death, from
" Pangs of guilt."

In the latter end of the reign of Herod, the Angel Gabriel (who had made known to Daniel the precise time of the coming of the Messiah, by a determinate number of weeks) was sent to Zachary, a pious and upright Priest, of the course of Abiah; and while officiating at the altar, and offering up incense in the Temple, Gabriel informed him of the birth of a Son, and that Son should have the distinguished Honour of being the Forerunner and Harbinger of their glorious and long looked-for Messiah. Six months after, Gabriel was again sent to Nazareth, with a gracious message to Mary; God had honoured her to be the happy Mother of the Saviour, now expected to be born. The Angel directed Mary to name the Child Jesus. In great astonishment and surprize, Mary stood wondring how these things could be, Gabriel reasons with her, and condescendingly resolves her doubts and perplexities. In humble confidence, Mary gratefully submitted to the Will of Heaven. Before the Angel took his leave, he comforts her by revealing the unexpected glad tidings he himself had brought to her cousin Elizabeth; upon which Mary set out on a journey to the hilly country, to visit her. Soon after her return, an Edict from Augustus Cæsar, enjoining all the subjects of the Roman Empire, to repair to their
several

several Cities, in order to have their names enrolled for a general Taxation, obliged Joseph, and his espoused Wife, to take a journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the City of David, to be enrolled there, as they were both of them of the Lineage of David. Thus the Emperor's Decree was subservient to the accomplishment of the Prophecies respecting the Messiah. Mary arrived at Bethlehem, and there she brought forth her Son, and her descent from the Royal Line of David was publickly recognized.

The Birth of the Messiah was first announced to the Shepherds, watching their flocks; an Angel delivered the Message, and a multitude of the Heavenly Host were seen accompanying him. So astonishing was the Blaze of Light, the Shepherds were sore afraid, and the Angel kindly tells them, "Fear not ye, to you I bring glad Tidings; unto you is born a Saviour, the long looked-for Messiah, Christ the Lord."

The whole Choir, in rapturous Joy, all burst forth,

"Glory to God in the highest,

"Peace on Earth, good-will to Men."

A new Star, on the rehearsal of this Birthday Ode, made its first entrance, and shone bright in the Heavens. From a far country, it conducted the Wise Men of the East, and they
came

came and brought their Offerings to Bethlehem, and paid Homage to the Saviour.

Over the house where the young Child lay, the Star magnificently fixed.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, when Caiphas was High Priest at Jerusalem, John appeared as a Prophet, and ushered in the Christian Æra. "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Until this glorious Proclamation by John, the Jewish Oeconomy may be said to have lasted; and now the Ministry of the Gospel, the Kingdom of the Messiah, to commence.

After the Jews had been preserved a distinct People more than fourteen hundred years, in the fulness of time, according to the exact Predictions of all his Prophets, God had fulfilled his Promise, and now sent his Son to them. He was born among them at Bethlehem, commissioned to make a new, a better Covenant with them, to the Benefits of which they should be first invited, and after them, uniting Jew and Gentile, every People of every Nation and Kindred throughout the Universe.

During the thirtieth JUBILEE, the last that was ever celebrated in Canaan, about twenty years after the death of Herod, while the Jews were under bondage and in subjection to Rome,
Pontius

Pontius Pilate, their Governor, our Saviour made his publick entrance into Jerusalem, and like a Rising Sun, dispelled the Mists of Ignorance, and brought Life and Immortality to Light. He openly preached in their Synagogues; during the space of three years, he went about—teaching as never man taught—explaining the Duties of Life, and enforcing his Divine Morality, by the most winning, amiable, and condescending Manners, the wisest Precepts, and all the attractive Charms and Majesty of Example. He revealed to his countrymen, a Religion refined, pure, and spiritual; a Resurrection from Death; Remission from Sin; and a Salvation never known to them before. The Jewish System had respect to the narrow interests of the present Life; His opened to their view, the Certainty and unbounded Prospects of a Future and Eternal.

It was during the time of this his publick Ministry, Publius Lentulus, the President, is said thus to have mentioned him. His Letters were addressed to the Roman Senate.

Conscript

Conscript Fathers,

THERE appears among us a Man of great Virtue, named Jesus Christ; the Gentiles esteem him as a Prophet of Truth, but his own Disciples call him the Son of God. He raiseth the Dead to life, and cureth all Manner of Diseases. Of Stature somewhat tall and comely; his Hair the Colour of a Filbird fully ripe, curling and waved about his Shoulders; a reverent Countenance, what you would both love and fear; his Look innocent; his Eyes quick; in reprov'g terrible; in admonishing courteous; in speaking modest and wise; none have ever seen him laugh, but many have seen him weep: for singular Beauty he surpasses the Children of Men.

One Description and Eulogium more will finish my Essays, and that I take from Josephus the Jewish Historian. " At this time appeared Jesus, " a wise Man, if it be lawful to call him a Man, " for he performed divers admirable works, the " Instructor of those who willingly enquired after " Truth. He drew divers Jews and Greeks to " be his Followers. This was Christ, accused by " the Princes of our Nation, condemned by our " People, and punished with Crucifixion. Yet " they ceased not to love him, who had once sat " their

“ their love upon him, for he appeared alive
 “ again the third day, and a Nation from him
 “ took the Denomination of Christians”

Pursuing the allusion to the Sun, the grandest object in our creation, permit me to extend it, by contemplating with you, how much more glorious this Sun of Righteousness appeared in its Setting! although it exhibited convulsions of Nature unutterably tremendous and awful; for, added to the horrors of the spectacle, an Earthquake commenced the alarm, the earth trembled and shook—the Rocks rent—the Graves opened—the Vail of the Temple was torn asunder (probably while Caiphas, the High Priest, was burning Incense behind it)—and there was darkness at noon-day, a total Eclipse, lasting three hours—and while the Moon was at the full.* The Stars of Heaven appeared, and so universal the darkness, it was over all the Earth, under the same Hemisphere; so that a Heathen Philosopher, who witnessed it in Egypt, cried out in astonishment, “ Behold the Divine Being, suffer-
 “ eth himself, or he sympathizeth with one who
 “ does.” These were all in a short time succeeded by scenes in Judæa transcendently august and magnificent, and they accompanied the Resurrection and Ascension of the Son of God.

* THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH NISAN.

VOL. II.

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The

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The

The Dead Warrant issued out for Crucifixion by the Roman State, and signed by Pontius Pilate, was this :

“ Go, Officer, Nail his hands, cover face and head with a hood, and hang up his body on the “ Accursed Tree.” *

The Brow of our Lord was insultingly beset with a Crown of Thorns ; the Cap or Hood seems therefore to have been dispensed with ; He could now see his Mother and his favourite Disciple, to whom, with filial affection, he so thoughtfully consigned her. Had this part of the Sentence been literally fulfilled, we might possibly have lost this tender token of filial duty, this careful provision, and kind alleviation of her sorrows.

The Jews, after his death, more and more unthankful and irreligious, and having now, at length, filled up the measure of their iniquity, by so many cruel persecutions, and this last tremendous, most sad, and horrid scene ; God soon after chose to punish them, by destroying their Polity, tearing up even with a Plough-share the very foundation of their City, and laying their Temple in ashes ; at first, in Slavery and Captivity, and under many disadvantages and preju-

* Words of the Roman Warrant :

I, LICTOR, COLLIGA MANUS, CAPUT OBNUBITO, ET INFÆLICI ARBORE SUSPENDETO.

dices,

dices, even still, they are widely dispersed through the habitable world. In the remotest parts of China, and over all the East, the Jew is seen a busy merchant, a Wanderer by profession, marrying only amongst his own Tribes, eating only according to his own Law, an unfortunate Bar to liberal, manly, and social enjoyment, to domestic conviviality, table conversation, and the agreeable intercourses of life. Thus, in every Nation, Kingdom, and City, they appear as a cloud of witnesses, attesting the truth of the Old Testament, and fulfilling the Prophecies. By an illustrious act of Divine Providence, astonishingly upheld, distinct, unmixed, surviving all their Conquerors, even to the present moment; and the pious Jew, yielding to a conviction he could not resist, is looking forward to a brighter Period, when his scattered Tribes shall be re-united, and his once happy country, long desolate and forlorn, shall again become the Scene of some future Glory; and afresh display the Sovereignty, the Presence, and the Majesty of God.

F I N I S.
